The Nibelungenlied

The Lay of the Nibelungs

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WRITTEN down by an anonymous poet *c.*1200, the *Nibelungenlied* (*Lay of the Nibelungs*) is the greatest medieval German heroic poem, a revenge saga on an epic scale, which has justly been compared with Homer and with the Old Icelandic *Saga of Burnt Njal*. Its origins reach back into the fifth century; it underwent a long genesis in the form of oral poetry before taking on written form. It proved hugely popular in the Middle Ages, with some forty manuscripts and fragments surviving. In the sixteenth century it disappeared from sight for 200 years. The poem grew to become central to the nationalist thinking of the Romantics, and in the twentieth century was appropriated by Nazi propagandists. The *Nibelungenlied* was a central inspiration for Richard Wagner's *Ring* cycle and Fritz Lang's two-part silent film, *Siegfried's Death* and *Kriemhild's Revenge*.

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The Lay of the Nibelungs

Translated with an Introduction and Notes by
CYRIL EDWARDS

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For Kate, most indefatigable of readers,
and in memory of George T. Gillespie and David R. McLintock

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All errors are, as the cliché would have it, mine alone.

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All Mankinde is of one Author, and is in one volume; when one Man dies, one Chapter is not torne out of the booke, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated; God emploies several translators; some peeces are translated by age, some by sicknesse, some by warre, some by justice; but Gods hand is in every translation; and his hand shall binde up all our scattered leaves againe, for that Librarie where every booke shall lie open to one another.

(John Donne, *Devotions* VII)

Being true to the author is all.
(Naveed Chaudhri)

INTRODUCTION

WRITTEN down by an anonymous poet *c.*1200, the *Nibelungenlied*, to give it its commonly used Modern German title, is the greatest medieval German heroic poem or lay, a revenge saga on an epic scale, which has justly been compared with Homer and with the Old Icelandic *Saga of Burnt Njal*. It tells of the heroic dragon-slayer Sivrit's wooing of the beautiful Kriemhilt and King Gunther's wooing of the Amazon-like Queen Prünhilt. The brutal murder of Sivrit by the fierce anti-hero Hagen, and the vengeance wreaked by Kriemhilt are recounted in bloody detail. Its origins reach back into the fifth century; it underwent a long genesis in the form of oral poetry before taking on written form. The poem proved hugely popular in the Middle Ages, with some forty manuscripts and fragments surviving. The latest of these is the *Ambraser Heldenbuch*, a huge two-volume compilation of romances and epics, now in the Austrian National Library, which was compiled between 1504 and 1516 for the emperor Maximilian I. After this last late medieval recording of the text the lay disappeared from sight almost entirely for 200 years. Rediscovered in 1755, the *Nibelungenlied* then became central to the nationalist thinking of the Romantics, coming to be regarded, anachronistically, as the 'national epic' of the Germans. This nationalistic abuse of the text culminated in its popularity in the Third Reich. The *Lay of the Nibelungs* was a central inspiration behind Richard Wagner's monumental *Ring* cycle. Its greatest cinematic treatment is Fritz Lang's two-part silent film, *Siegfried's Death* and *Kriemhild's Revenge* (1922–4), one of the high points of Weimar cinema.

The Poet and the Literary Context

Half a century ago it was possible to write with some confidence of 'the poet of the *Nibelungenlied*', or the 'Last Poet', while accepting his anonymity and the fact that we know virtually nothing of his identity. Recent research has oscillated between accepting this older, monolithic view of a single author responsible for fashioning the epic as we know it, and acknowledging the debt that the lay owes to oral poetry. The possibility of reconstructing the archetype of the

text has been more or less abandoned. Thus, when this introduction refers to 'the poet', it is no more than a matter of convenience. The language of the manuscripts points to the south-eastern German-speaking area. The poet's intimate knowledge of the Danube area suggests that he was of Austrian origin, while his criticism of Bavarian robbers points away from Bavaria. The poet may have been a cleric, though there is little apart from his literacy to suggest this. That literacy was not the sole prerogative of the clergy *c.*1200 is evident from what the anonymous poet's near-contemporaries, Hartmann von Aue and Wolfram von Eschenbach, tell us about themselves. Hartmann identifies himself as a *dienstman*, a *ministerialis* exercising administrative functions at a Swabian court, and the prologue to his Arthurian romance *Iwein or The Knight with the Lion* stresses the possibility that a knight may be learned, even though this may be unusual. Wolfram, almost certainly tongue-in-cheek, places even greater emphasis upon his knightly rank, claiming in *Parzival*: 'I don't know a single letter of the alphabet.'

The second half of the twelfth and the first half of the thirteenth century saw an extraordinary flowering of literary activity in the German vernacular, based for the most part in the courts of the aristocracy (hence its German name, *die höfische Blütezeit*). This fertile period is sometimes referred to as 'the Middle High German (MHG) classical period'. Central to this activity were two new genres, the courtly love-lyric (*Minnesang*) and the Arthurian romance. The great lyric poets included Walther von der Vogelweide and Heinrich von Morungen. Gnomic, political, and religious lyrics were also composed and sung. The three major narrative poets were Hartmann, Wolfram von Eschenbach, and Gottfried von Strassburg, the author of the greatest medieval version of the story of Tristan and Isolde; all three were writing between *c.*1180 and 1220. The oldest surviving religious play in German, the Muri Easter Play (*Osterspiel von Muri*), also dates from this period.

An older genre also flourished alongside these newcomers, the heroic epic. Oral in origin, these epics found their way into writing in the thirteenth century, many of them in the same manuscripts as the courtly romances. A number of epics had at their core Dietrich of Bern (historically Theodoric the Ostrogoth, of Verona),[1] who plays a

[1] See Appendix I: History and Legend.

central role in the final stages of the *Nibelungenlied*. The Thirty-eighth Adventure introduces (and kills off) a large number of characters who would have been familiar to the audience from the Dietrich epics, in particular *Biterolf und Dietleib*, which accords a prominent role to Rüedeger. *Biterolf* was probably first written down in the 1250s, in the Austrian or Styrian area familiar to the *Nibelungenlied* poet, but may well have been circulating earlier in oral form. The audience would have delighted in recognizing old friends from these epics. They were, like the *Nibelungenlied* itself, anonymous, a constituent element of the genre. The *Nibelungenlied* stands head and shoulders above the Dietrich epics in terms of literary quality. We possess evidence of the popularity both of the lay, and of other heroic epics, before the date of the earliest manuscripts, in Wolfram's *Parzival*, where, in the eighth book, the cowardly Sir Liddamus argues for discretion being the better part of valour: 'What kind of Wolfhart would I make? . . . Even if it never won your favour, I would rather act like Rumolt, who gave King Gunther his advice when he left Worms to go to the Huns—he urged him to baste long cutlets and turn them round in the cauldron.'[2] Landgrave Kingrimursel recognizes the allusion to 'Rumolt's counsel' in the *Nibelungenlied*: 'you say you act like that cook who advised the bold Nibelungs, who set off, undeterred, for where vengeance was wrought upon them for what had happened to Siegfried in the past.' Liddamus goes on to refer to other characters well known from the Dietrich epics, Sibeche and Ermenrich.

Wolfram's juxtaposition of characters from the *Nibelungenlied* and the Dietrich epics dates from the first decade of the thirteenth century, as we can deduce from references in *Parzival* to events in 1203 and 1204.[3] Wolfram's allusions yield no certainty as to whether he knew of the *Nibelungenlied* in oral or in written form, but they hint at his knowledge of the whole plot, and presume that Wolfram's audience was familiar with the lay in something like the version we find in the earliest manuscripts a quarter of a century later.

[2] Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival and Titurel*, trans. Cyril Edwards, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 177–8.

[3] See Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival with Titurel and the Love Lyrics*, trans. Cyril Edwards, Arthurian Studies (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), pp. xiii–xvi.

The Plot and its Characters

The *Nibelungenlied* is divided into thirty-nine 'adventures' or chapters. (This division and the adventures' titles are well preserved in the manuscripts, with the exception of the First Adventure.) In the first two adventures we are introduced, in parallel, to the two central protagonists of the first half of the lay, Kriemhilt and Sivrit. The First Adventure tells us of Kriemhilt, Princess of Burgundy, a kingdom which has as its capital Worms on the Rhine.[4] Kriemhilt, daughter of Queen Uote, is under the guardianship of her brothers, the three kings of Burgundy, Gunther, Gernot, and Giselher. A prominent figure at the Burgundian court is Hagen of Tronege, vassal and chief adviser to the kings.

The Second Adventure introduces us to Sivrit, Prince of the Netherlands, and tells of his courtly upbringing. In the Third Adventure he rides to Worms, intending to win Kriemhilt for his bride, and from then on Sivrit's fortunes are intertwined with those of the Burgundians. He is particularly close to King Gunther, who proves to be a weak king, a *roi fainéant*, much in the same mould as King Arthur in the Arthurian romances of the twelfth-century French poet Chrétien de Troyes and their MHG adaptations by Hartmann von Aue and Wolfram von Eschenbach, or King Marke in the various medieval versions of the tale of Tristan and Isolde. Also in the Third Adventure Hagen gives us a retrospective account of Sivrit's upbringing, telling of his superhuman strength and its origins, and of his acquisition of the priceless hoard of the Nibelungs, a race of dwarves resident somewhere to the north of the Netherlands.

Like Sivrit, Gunther is soon intent on wooing. He seeks for his bride Prünhilt, Queen of Iceland, an Amazonian figure of supernatural strength. She and Sivrit are parallel, equally dominant personalities, who have an aura of myth about them, and the lay does indeed hint at their prior knowledge of one another.[5] The wooing expedition to Iceland ultimately proves successful, but only because Sivrit has

[4] On the historical background see Appendix I: History and Legend.

[5] In some Old Icelandic sources Prünhilt has a child by Sivrit, called Aslaug. See Appendix II: The Nordic Sources and the Problem of Genesis.

recourse to supernatural means: his massive strength and his cloak of invisibility. Once established as queen in Burgundy, Prünhilt quarrels with Kriemhilt over the relative rank of their two husbands, and this dispute over precedence leads to a conspiracy to kill Sivrit.

The second half of the lay tells of the vengeance Kriemhilt seeks to take upon the murderers of Sivrit. She marries for a second time, her husband now being Etzel, King of the Huns. Although Etzel owes his historical roots to Attila the Hun, he proves to be another weak king. Hagen shifts from being a brutal murderer to a stoic hero (or anti-hero), the 'hope of the Nibelungs'. The name Nibelungs is transferred to the Burgundians, as they make their fatal journey to Hungary. Kriemhilt undergoes a character change, transformed from the innocent maiden of the early adventures to a 'she-devil'.

The supernatural elements found in the first half of the lay are for the most part lacking in the second half, with the exception of the water-sprites, the wise women who foretell to Hagen the fate of the Nibelungs. Instead a whole host of new characters are introduced. The marriage between Kriemhilt and Etzel is promoted by Rüedeger, Margrave of Pöchlarn, a powerful and magnanimous Austrian exile at Etzel's court. Also in exile at the court are Dietrich of Bern and his retinue of warriors. Foremost among these is old Hildebrant, Dietrich's master-at-arms. Both Dietrich and Hildebrant figure in the oldest surviving German heroic poem, the Old High German *Hildebrandslied*, whose manuscript dates from the early ninth century. (In the *Hildebrandslied*, however, Dietrich and Hildebrand are on opposite sides.)

As the lay moves towards the final catastrophe, Volker of Alzey, the bloodthirsty minstrel, comes to play a prominent role on the Burgundian side. King Gunther now shakes off his weakness and becomes a heroic figure. Other characters on the Hunnish side make brief appearances in the battles: these include Blœdelin, Etzel's brother, and Irinc, Margrave of Denmark. Ultimately, though, it is the central characters, Kriemhilt, Hagen, and Gunther, who determine the outcome and the doom of the Nibelungs.

An Heroic Poem in Courtly Times

Near the beginning of Hartmann von Aue's *Iwein* or *The Knight with the Lion* there is a brief catalogue of the leisure pursuits which are

popular at the court of King Arthur, and which we may take as an accurate reflection of courtly culture *c.*1200:

> When they had eaten that Whit Day, / many a man took such pleasure / as then suited him best of all. / Some conversed with the women, / some exercised themselves, / some danced, some sang, / some ran, some leapt, / some listened to the playing of string instruments, / some shot at the target, / some spoke of love's sorrows, / some of valour. / Gawein attended to his arms.[6]

Almost all of these activities are to be found in the *Nibelungenlied*, and typify the way in which the lay, as written down in the late twelfth century, reflects the courtly world. Even two of the games that Prünhilt sets as challenges to Gunther in Iceland, leaping and shooting, are present here, though in the Seventh Adventure they have the ring of parody.

The warfare practised in the *Nibelungenlied* is in some respects also state-of-the-art. The couched lance, the lance held underarm, was developed from the late eleventh century onwards.[7] The one-on-one joust and the massed charge known as the bohort are other features that develop in the twelfth century, primarily in tournaments. The battle between Hagen and Gelpfrat in the Twenty-sixth Adventure is a two-stage process, well known from tournaments and from the Arthurian romance: first the knights joust on horseback, then this leads into a sword-fight on foot.

Yet there are echoes of an older, more heroic world, particularly in the second part of the lay. The slaying of the child Ortliep is not an incident that would occur in courtly romance, nor indeed is the killing of Kriemhilt. Dragons often figure in Arthurian romance, as in Hartmann's *Iwein*, but bathing in the dragon's blood seems also to hark back to an older age. The consequence of the bathing in the blood is Sivrit's supernatural strength; both this and the corresponding physical prowess of Prünhilt mark these as characters who would be out of place in contemporary courtly literature. The supernatural is far from being absent in the courtly romance, where

[6] Hartmann von Aue, *Iwein* or *The Knight with the Lion*, ed. and trans. Cyril Edwards, Arthurian Archives, German Romance, 3 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2007), ll. 62–73.

[7] See Jim Bradbury, *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Warfare* (London: Routledge, 2004), 244–5.

giants, dwarves, fairies, and invisibility are frequently met with, but there is a different feel, a different atmosphere when it occurs in the heroic epic. The prophecy of the water-sprites, for example, which leads to Hagen's brutal attempt on the life of the chaplain, is integral to the sense of *wyrd*, of inexorable fate, familiar to the reader of *Beowulf*, of the *Hildebrandslied*, and of Icelandic sagas such as the great tale of revenge, the *Saga of Burnt Njal*.

Sivrit's childhood and upbringing epitomize the dichotomy between the heroic and the courtly ethos. In the Second Adventure we learn: 'They very rarely let the boy ride without a guard. Sigmunt and Siglint ordered that he be elegantly dressed. The wise men of the court, knowledgeable in matters of reputation, also took care of him.' (strophe 25). The son of Sivrit and Kriemhilt is given similar care at court: 'They took great care over his upbringing, as was his due.' (stophe 716). This sheltered upbringing at the royal court contrasts sharply with the account of Sivrit's youth given by Hagen in the Third Adventure, which portrays Sivrit as the hero who sets off alone in search of adventure, a migratory motif common in heroic epic (and in fairy-tale). The Eighth Adventure, which describes Sivrit's return to the land of the Nibelungs and his conquering of the giant and the dwarf-king Albrich, is clearly an attempt by the narrator to compensate retrospectively for the lack of an earlier account of Sivrit's heroic youth. It does little to further the plot.

Another way in which the courtly ethos exerts its influence is in the portrayal of love. After some youthful dalliance with unnamed ladies of the court, Sivrit's 'thoughts turned to noble love' (strophe 47). *hôhe minne*, 'noble love' or, more literally, 'lofty love', is courtly love, *fin amors*, love at a distance, and there can be no doubt that the portrayal of the early relationship between Sivrit and Kriemhilt was influenced by this central concept of courtly culture. Courtly love ceases at the point of marriage, and Sivrit's punishment of Kriemhilt, when he beats her for being too loose-tongued, is not a motif to be found in the courtly romance.

In the Twenty-seventh Adventure Volker the fiddler shows his musical skills at Pöchlarn, performing *Minnesang*, the courtly love-lyric: 'Bold Volker, with his fiddle, walked over and stood courteously before Gotelint. He fiddled sweet melodies and sang her his songs.' The relationship between Volker and Gotelint, Margrave Rüedeger's wife, is one of admiration from a distance, and bears a

resemblance to the relationships to be found in the wooing songs of *Minnesang*. This scene contrasts sharply with the bloody use Volker later makes of his fiddle in battle against the Huns: 'Do you hear the melodies, Hagen, which Volker is fiddling amongst the Huns over there, all those who go to the doors? It is red rosin he rubs on his fiddle's bow!' (strophe 2004).

The *Nibelungenlied* owes its origins to oral poetry. For a long time, for some five centuries if not more, the ancient tales to which the poet refers in the first strophe had been circulating in oral form, and we cannot be certain when they first made their entry into writing. These origins colour not only the plot and ethos, but also the lay's style. Albert Lord and Milman Parry's studies, based on Homer and Balkan traditional poetry, read like a template for the performer of this poem, who must also, to an extent we cannot now determine, have been its shaper:

> The poetic grammar of oral epic is and must be based on the formula. It is a grammar of parataxis and of frequently used and useful phrases. Usefulness in composition carries no implication of opprobrium. Quite the contrary. Without this usefulness the style, and, more important, the whole practice would collapse or would never have been born. The singer's mode of composition is dictated by the demands of performance at high speed, and he depends upon inculcated habit and association of sounds, words, phrases, and lines. He does not shrink from the habitual; nor does he either require the fixed for memorization or seek the unusual for its own sake.[8]

This style, so heavily dependent on parataxis and repetition, is far from alien to the Anglo-American oral tradition. It is preserved, for example, in the border ballads, and in much folk-song of Anglo-Irish origins which can still be heard today.

None of the manuscripts of the *Nibelungenlied* preserves a melody, but this may be because very few melodies for German epics or lyrics are recorded before *c.*1300. (A notable exception is the *Carmina Burana* manuscript, dating from *c.*1230.) The melody of the fifteenth-century *Jüngeres Hildebrandslied* (*Later Hildebrandslied*) has been suggested as a possibility for the *Nibelungenlied*.[9] Even

[8] Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Harvard Studies in Comparative Literature, 24 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), 65.

[9] Karl H. Bertau and Rudolf Stephan, 'Zum sanglichen Vortrag mhd. strophischer Epen', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, 87 (1956/7), 253–70.

today, in the Balkans, war epics, orally composed, are performed with musical accompaniment on a single-stringed instrument, and it is tempting to suggest that the same held for the *Nibelungenlied*. The MHG poet's performance is usually referred to as 'singen unde sagen' ('singing and saying'), which certainly points to a musical recitation.

The Reception of the Nibelungenlied

The latest of the complete manuscripts of the *Nibelungenlied* (MS d) was written between 1504 and 1516 by Hans Ried, the meticulous scribe of the 'Ambraser Heldenbuch', a customs officer in the employ of Emperor Maximilian I. In the middle of the sixteenth century some strophes from the now lost MS c were published. In 1692 there is a reference to the *Nibelungenlied* in Hans Jacob von Wagenfels' *Ehren-Ruff Teütsch-Lands*, describing Seyuridt's journey to Gunther's land.[10] This apart, the lay disappeared from sight for some 200 years. The same fate befell the whole of medieval German literature.

In 1755 the Swabian doctor, mystic, and private scholar Jacob Hermann Obereit (1725–98) found the thirteenth-century manuscript which was later to be designated C in the library of the Count of Hohenems.[11] The Swiss scholar and critic Johann Jakob Bodmer (1698–1783) played a key role in the restoration of the *Nibelungenlied* to public attention, publishing the final part of the lay in 1757.[12] It was Bodmer who first drew the comparison with Homer, likening the poem to the *Iliad*.

The first complete edition was published by Bodmer's pupil, Christoph Heinrich Müller (or Myller), in 1782. Goethe had seen Bodmer's copy of the lay in Zurich in 1779, and had Müller's edition sent to him, but it lay unread for over twenty years, until 1808/9, when he read extracts to the Weimar literary circle. Goethe's

[10] Winder McConnell, *The Nibelungenlied*, Twayne's World Author Series (Boston: Twayne, 1984), p. xi.

[11] The account that follows owes much to Ursula Schulze, *Das Nibelungenlied, Literaturstudium* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997), 278–98, and Neil Thomas, 'The *Nibelungenlied* and the Third Reich', in id. (ed.), *Celtic and Germanic Themes in European Literature* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1994), 121–31.

[12] Under the title *Chriemhilden Rache und die Klage. Zwei Heldengedichte aus dem Schwaebischen Zeitpuncte*. It was common, when medieval German literature was first rediscovered, to locate it in Swabia, no doubt because the Swabian dialect retained, and still retains, many of the vowel sounds of MHG.

belated interest was inspired by the patriotic movements of the early nineteenth century. His interest in the poem persisted over the next two years, and he wrote an introduction to the 1827 translation of Karl Simrock (1802–76), the most successful of the many nineteenth-century translations, which was published posthumously.

The late eighteenth-century reception of the poem was not uniformly enthusiastic. Müller had dedicated his edition, which included other medieval poems, to the Prussian king Frederick the Great (1712–86), from whose pen stems the most famous derogatory remark about the *Nibelungenlied*: in a letter to Müller dated 22 February 1784, Frederick wrote that his anthology was not worth 'a shot of powder'.[13] This remark, though, has to be seen in the broader context of the animosity towards the German language at the Francophile Prussian court. French was Frederick the Great's native language, in which he wrote execrable poetry, which not even Voltaire could redeem. The king once told the scholar and critic Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700–66) that he had never read a book in German, and that he spoke the language *comme un cocher* ('like a coachman').[14] On another occasion Frederick remarked: 'A German singer! I should as soon expect to get pleasure from the neighing of my horse.' Frederick read German books in French translation. As for the spoken language, he opined: 'Je ne parle allemand qu'à mes chevaux', a remark echoed by Voltaire in a letter from Potsdam in 1750: 'I live here as in France. Only French is spoken; German is for soldiers and horses—you only need it when travelling.'[15] (Even Goethe's sister Cornelia wrote her diary and correspondence in French.[16]) All this did not deter Frederick the Great from writing his treatise *De la Littérature Allemande*, published in 1780. As one of his biographers drily remarked: 'Seldom can a writer have been so profoundly ignorant of his subject.'[17]

Another detractor was the prolific playwright August Friedrich Ferdinand von Kotzebue (1761–1819), who held the *Nibelungenlied*

[13] McConnell, *Nibelungenlied*, p. xii.

[14] Ludwing Reiners, *Frederick the Great. An Informal Biography*, translated and adapted from the German by Lawrence P. Wilson (London: Oswald Wolff, 1960), 277.

[15] Reiners, 137.

[16] W. Walker Chambers & John R. Wilkie, *A Short History of the German Language* (London: Methuen, 1970), 47.

[17] Reiners, 277.

to be 'simply a foolish fairy tale, lacking spirit, feeling, and imagination'.[18] One suspects that Kotzebue had not read the poem to its bitter end. These negative voices were, however, very much in the minority. The last quarter of the eighteenth century saw a sea-change in attitudes to the German language and its medieval past, brought about by a combination of factors: the rise of classical German literature, with Goethe and Schiller in the forefront; the medievalism of early Romantic authors such as Tieck, Schlegel, and Novalis; the reaction to the Napoleonic invasion and the concomitant growth in German nationalism; the restoration of the prestige of the German language and the growth of academic interest in it fostered by the grammarian Johann Christoph Adelung (1732–1806), and his predecessors Gottsched and Justus Georg Schottelius (1612–76).

The early nineteenth century saw three editions by Friedrich von der Hagen (1807, 1810, and 1816), which were enthusiastically reviewed by the brothers Grimm, Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859). The Grimm brothers were to become seminal figures in the nineteenth-century reception of medieval literature, Jacob as the greatest philologist and grammarian of his age, and as editor of the first great German dictionary; Wilhelm as an editor of a great many medieval texts. The Grimms worked together in complete harmony throughout their long lives, most famously, of course, collecting and editing their definitive collection of fairy-tales.

The Grimm brothers' enthusiasm proved infectious. August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845), in his Berlin lectures of 1802, held the *Nibelungenlied* to be superior to the *Iliad*, because of the magnitude of its passions, characters, and plot.[19] He argued in 1812 that it should be a major text for the education of German youth. This nationalistic reception of the poem reached one of its early high points in 1815, when Johann August Zeune (1783–1853), a geographer and director of the Berlin institutes for the blind, published his own translation in small format as a 'Feld- und Zeltausgabe' ('battlefield and tent edition'), to be carried into war by 'courageous patriotic warriors'; Zeune held lectures on the *Nibelungenlied* to packed audiences in Berlin, Frankfurt, Heidelberg, and Worms. From 1800

[18] McConnell, *Nibelungenlied*, p. xiii.
[19] Schulze, *Das Nibelungenlied,* 281–2.

onwards the lay occupied a firm place in the public imagination, as well as being taught in universities and schools.

Alongside this popular reception, the academic study of the work prospered. The classicist Karl Lachmann (1793–1851) was to become the major figure in the foundation of the new discipline of medieval German studies, editing the works of Wolfram von Eschenbach and the lyrics of Walther von der Vogelweide. For the *Nibelungenlied*, he relied characteristically on a base manuscript, a single codex, MS A, in his edition of 1826. Disputes followed concerning the relative value and date of the three central manuscripts, known as A, B, and C. It was the edition by Karl Bartsch (1832–88), based on manuscript B, which won the day and which remains, with only minor revisions, the most widely studied text. Some forty complete manuscripts and fragments of the *Nibelungenlied* now survive, which points to a considerable interest throughout the Middle Ages. Its popularity was thus greater than that of Hartmann von Aue's Arthurian romances, though not as great as the *Parzival* and *Willehalm* of Wolfram von Eschenbach. In the last decade four new fragments of the *Nibelungenlied* have been discovered. These point to lost originals; it is often the case that fragments prove to be older in date than those manuscripts which preserve an entire text. Editing the text is thus likely to prove a never-ending task.

The Romantics and the nationalist movements of the nineteenth century, as we have seen, played a key part in the projection of the *Nibelungenlied* as a 'Nationalepos'. This culminated in 1896, when the patriotic writer Adolf Bartels referred to Germany as 'Nibelungenland', and the Iron Chancellor, Bismarck, was dubbed 'the iron Siegfried' (*der eiserne Siegfried*) by the poet Hermann Hoffmeister.[20] While none of the central characters in the lay is identified as German, this has not prevented the *Nibelungenlied* being employed again and again for nationalistic purposes, and the early twentieth century saw the continuation and consolidation of this abuse. In 1909 Reichskanzler Fürst von Bülow, in an address to the Reichstag on relations between Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, appealed to the concept of 'Nibelungentreue' ('the loyalty of the Nibelungs'), establishing this concept of loyalty to the death as practised above all by Hagen, and most notoriously applied to

[20] Thomas, 'The *Nibelungenlied* and the Third Reich', 123–4.

Stalingrad in 1943. The other side to Hagen was also exploited. Hindenburg in 1919 likened the German defeat on the Western Front to the murder of Siegfried by Hagen. This 'Dolchstoβlegende', the myth of 'the stab in the back', was to become central to Nazi propaganda.[21]

This exploitation of the poem for propagandistic purposes rose to a new peak in the Third Reich, with its emphasis on what were perceived as 'heroic' values. (The 1940 and 1944 editions of the text by Helmut de Boor (1891–1976) are not free from this distortion.[22])

Christabel Bielenberg (1909–2003), that extraordinarily courageous British eyewitness to the implementation of Nazi ideology, could not quite believe it. In the spring and summer of 1939 she was 'shuttl[ing] back and forth' between Berlin and England: 'Sometimes as I travelled back to England I wondered what in heaven's name I was at, wandering pop-eyed in a world about which I knew so little . . . ordinary citizens, fat as butter, kidding themselves they were descendants of Siegfrieds and Sieglindes.'[23] Hermann Göring was particularly prominent in the attempted equation of Nazi and 'heroic' values. In the pre-war correspondence between Göring and Lord and Lady Londonderry, the latter addressed the ex-pilot as 'My dear General der Flieger Siegfried' to tell him how much his photograph had been admired at a big political reception at Londonderry House. Flattered—and probably amused—he could not resist signing a return letter 'Hermann Göring (Siegfried)'.[24]

Siegfried in particular was central to the Third Reich's cult of the hero, and there was even a movement to substitute a Siegfried cult for Christianity, spearheaded by one Siegfried Reuter, who, in his book *Sigfrid oder Christus*, appealed to his fellow Germans to turn back from Christianity to the old semi-divine figure, apostrophizing Siegfried in terms appropriate to a solar deity. Siegfried was intended

[21] See Joachim Petzold, *Die Dolchstoβlegende. Eine Geschichtsfälschung im Dienst des deutschen Imperialismus und Militärismus*. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin. Schriften des Instituts für Geschichte. Reihe I: Allgemeine und deutsche Geschichte, 18 (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1963), 41.

[22] See Cyril Edwards, 'Censoring Siegfried's Love-Life: The *Nibelungenlied* in the Third Reich', in *Mythos-Sage-Erzählung. Gedenkschrift für Alfred Ebenbauer*, ed. Johannes Keller and Florian Kragl (Vienna: University Press, 2009).

[23] Christabel Bielenberg, *The Past is Myself* (1968: rpt Reading: Pan, 1988), 44.

[24] Ian Kershaw, *Making Friends with Hitler: Lord Londonderry and Britain's Road to War* (London: Penguin, 2005), 145.

to be the godhead of a new 'Germanic' religion, free of Semitic associations. Perhaps the oddest of these attempts to exploit the poem came from the lips of Rudolf Hess, who declared, before his ill-fated landing by parachute in Scotland: 'I want to be the Hagen of the party!'[25] This casting of the Nazi cause in a heroic light was all-pervasive, and lasted beyond Stalingrad until the final days of the Third Reich.

Richard Wagner and the Nibelungenlied[26]

It is through Richard Wagner's Ring Cycle that most non-medievalists now know of the *Nibelungenlied*. Ironically, Wagner's operas are derived not for the most part from the MHG lay, but from the Old Icelandic *Völsunga saga*, which Wagner read in von der Hagen's translation of 1815.[27] Wagner also drew on *Þiðreks saga* and the *Poetic Edda*.[28] The first documented evidence that Wagner was interested in the *Nibelungenlied* dates from January 1844, when—a year into his appointment as assistant conductor at the Royal Court Theatre in Dresden—he began to borrow primary and secondary texts on the subject from the city's Royal Library. In pursuing his studies, he was responding to a call from several contributors to the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and, more immediately, to the *Kritische Gänge* of the German writer on aesthetics, Friedrich Theodor Vischer (1807–87), all of whom advocated the *Nibelungenlied* as the basis of a new German national opera. The idea of writing such a work was very much in the air at this time, and among the composers who are known to have considered an opera based on the poem are Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47), Robert Schumann (1810–56), Niels Gade (1817–90), and Franz Liszt (1811–86).

A great number of nineteenth-century stage plays were also inspired by the poem. Most significant of these was the *Die Nibelungen* by Friedrich Hebbel (1813–63), a 'German tragedy in

[25] Joachim Fest, *Das Gesicht des Dritten Reiches. Profile einer totalitären Gesellschaft* (Munich, 1963; 8th edn.; Munich: R. Piper, 1980), 259.

[26] This account is based largely on an essay kindly submitted by Stewart Spencer (London).

[27] See *The Saga of the Volsungs: The Norse Epic of Sigurd the Dragon Slayer*, trans. Jesse L. Byock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 27.

[28] On the Icelandic analogues, see Appendix II: The Nordic Sources and the Problem of Genesis.

three parts' planned in 1855. The first performance of the complete trilogy was in Weimar in 1861, with Hebbel's wife Christine playing the parts of both Brunhild and Kriemhild. The trilogy was much in favour in the Third Reich. Its reputation then suffered a decline, but has enjoyed several revivals recently.[29]

Wagner's initial interest in the *Nibelungenlied* found expression in a whole series of borrowings from the Dresden Royal Library and in his acquisition of no fewer than four editions and translations of the poem, namely, the MHG editions of Hermann Leyser (1811–43) and Alois Joseph Vollmer (1803–76), and the translations into Modern German of Gustav Pfizer (1807–90) and Karl Simrock. His original plan was to write a single work, a 'grand heroic opera', to be titled *Siegfrieds Tod* (*Siegfried's Death*). It begins with Siegfried's betrayal of Brünnhilde through his complicity with the Gibichungs (Wagner's Burgundians), and ends with the Gibichungs' betrayal of Siegfried and his death at Hagen's hands. Siegfried is joined in death by Brünnhilde, his demise serving to bolster the gods' morally compromised rule. As such, the libretto, which dates from November 1848, follows the conventions of the Romantic neo-medieval operas of the period, dealing with the themes of love, betrayal, and vengeance and ending with a *Liebestod* lifted straight from *Der fliegende Holländer* (*The Flying Dutchman*), which Wagner had composed in 1843. *Siegfrieds Tod*—later revised as *Götterdämmerung*, the fourth and final part of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*—is the section of the finished work most heavily indebted to the *Nibelungenlied*. Demonstrable borrowings include Siegfried's belligerent arrival at Gunther's court (Third Adventure), the oath that the hero swears in an attempt to clear his name (Fourteenth Adventure), the betrayal of his vulnerable spot (Tenth Adventure), and the whole sequence of events surrounding his murder at Hagen's hands (Sixteenth Adventure). Conversely, the famous scene in which Prünhilt and Kriemhilt confront one another on the steps of the minster at Worms (Fourteenth Adventure) had already inspired the encounter between Elsa and Ortrud in front of Antwerp Cathedral in Act Two of *Lohengrin* (completed in 1848 and first staged under Liszt in Weimar in 1850). *Lohengrin* owes the core of its plot to the story of Loherangrin in Wolfram's *Parzival*.

[29] Frank Lamport (Worcester College, Oxford) kindly volunteered these details.

The appeal of the poem, with its medieval trappings, began to wane as soon as Wagner started to develop anarchical leanings and turned to myth as an expression of necessary revolutionary change. He could not use history to invoke his vision of the future: myth alone could embody the cosmic clash between the forces of reaction and a more humane and enlightened regime. It was in order to excavate what he believed was the mythic substratum of all the available material that Wagner began to delve more deeply into the Scandinavian versions of the legend, versions which, in keeping with the scholarly thinking of his time, he regarded as more archaic and, hence, as more prototypically 'German' than the thirteenth-century *Nibelungenlied*; Wagner himself uses the word 'urdeutsch' in this context. The essential 'Germanness' of the Nibelung legend was one of the few constant factors in his attitude to the *Ring*, and one that derives ultimately from Fichte's belief in the great German Revolution that would liberate the whole of humanity. In turn, this interest in Siegfried's prehistory led Wagner to preface *Siegfrieds Tod* with *Der junge Siegfried*, recounting his mythical hero's youthful adventures, and ultimately to add *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, describing in detail the gods' corrupt rule and Wotan's attempts to find a free and 'purely human' hero able to cleanse the world of the curse-laden ring. The four poems were completed by December 1852, the music not until November 1874. The cycle as a whole was first staged in Bayreuth, in the theatre that Wagner had had specially built for the work, in August 1876.

The second—and related—reason for Wagner's changing attitude to the *Nibelungenlied* stems from his increasing interest in the scholarly debates of the time: he read not only the primary MHG and Old Icelandic texts in translation, but also the writings of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Georg Gottfried Gervinus (1805–71), Karl Lachmann, Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, Ludwig Ettmüller (1802–77), Carl Wilhelm Göttling (1793–1869), and Franz Joseph Mone (1796–1871), many of whom sought to reconstruct a prototypical Nibelung myth inspired by the Romantic belief in the essential oneness of the surviving versions of the narrative. Echoing Lachmann and Jacob Grimm, Wagner now came to see Siegfried as a sun-god destroyed by the powers of darkness embodied in the Nibelungs, his death a part of the eternal cycle of death and rebirth. If the gods' rule had originally been consolidated by Siegfried's

death, those same gods were now to be superseded, a development bound up in part with Wagner's reading of Hegel, and in part with his own increasing involvement in the revolutionary movements of 1848–9 and their disenchanting aftermath. The frustrations attendant upon the first Bayreuth Festival of 1876 left Wagner feeling betrayed. If Siegfried had once been the embodiment of the New Man and the *Ring* a lesson in revolutionary thinking, the passing years brought about a change in Wagner's perception of the tetralogy. His second wife, Cosima (1837–1930), reports a conversation with him in 1882, only months before his death, in which he discusses the end of the cycle: 'He is pleased with it all, so heathen and so Germanic! . . . He recalls Gobineau [the racist thinker Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, 1816–82] and the Germanic world which came to an end with this work.' By now Siegfried was no longer the man of the future, but was consigned to a phase in the history of the world's evolution, re-auditioning for his role in the *Nibelungenlied*, while the *Ring* as a whole was felt to describe a phase in world history that pre-dated the degeneration of the species, reflecting a pristine Germanic Paradise that could never be regained. Myth had again become history.

Filming the Nibelungenlied

The *Nibelungenlied* has met with decidedly mixed fortunes in what has often been termed *the* medium of the twentieth century, cinema. The first director to tackle the subject was the Austrian Fritz Lang (1890–1976), intended by Goebbels to be the creator of National Socialist cinema before he fled the Third Reich in 1933. Lang's two-parter was made in the Babelsberg studios and their grounds in Berlin, in 1923–4. It is one of the great works of the silent era of Weimar cinema. The opening title dedicates the film 'to the German people', in huge Gothic print. Its script was by Thea von Harbou (1888–1954), Lang's then wife, who was later to become a member of the Nazi party. The first part, *Siegfrieds Tod* (*Siegfried's Death*), was re-released in a sound version in 1933, reflecting the iconic significance of Siegfried in the Third Reich. Significantly, the second part, *Kriemhilts Rache* (*Kriemhilt's Revenge*), with its final massacre of the Nibelungs, was not re-released; the Nazis had little interest in a film that concentrated on defeat. Lang's two-parter remains for the most part true to the medieval poem, though it does draw for its early

scenes on Richard Wagner. An accusation of racism has been levelled against the second part, Lang himself admitting that he wanted to portray 'the world of the wild Asiatic hordes of the Huns'.[30]

It is the monumental, geometrical style of the films' sets and the Expressionist camerawork that make Lang's two-parter a masterpiece, in particular the beautiful forest scenes with their concrete trees. As Manvell and Fraenkel put it: 'The dragon in *Siegfried's Death* remains one of the best-realized of screen monsters, controlled by a team of operators stationed both inside and beneath the monster, which was some twenty metres long.'[31] Its only rival in pre-war cinema is *King Kong* (1932).

In 1966–7 Harald Reinl (1908–86), a prominent and versatile representative of what came to be regarded by the young lions of New German Cinema as 'Opas Kino' ('Grandad's Cinema'), directed a colour remake of Lang's films, with the hammer-thrower Uwe Beyer playing Siegfried and Herbert Lom taking the part of Etzel. It would be a kindness to describe Reinl's film as mediocre, but worse was yet to come. The end of the 1960s and the early 1970s witnessed the nadir in the history of German film. The majority of cinemas turned themselves into *Bahnhofskinos*, 'station cinemas', showing an unvaried diet of soft- or hard-core pornographic films. Thus it came about that in 1971 Adrian Hoven directed an ill-conceived remake of the first Lang film, shown as part of a double bill: *Ich eine Groupie* prefacing *Siegfried und das sagenhafte Liebesleben der Nibelungen* (*Siegfried and the Legendary Love-life of the Nibelungs*). Hoven's film follows the plot very loosely; it incorporates more bathing scenes than were the norm in the Middle Ages, with Kriemhilt and her maidens in various stages of undress, and engaging in lesbian activities. The film ends with Siegfried's death being averted, which at least had the advantage of precluding a sequel.

The new millennium has seen the filming of the saga enter a new genre, with the fantasy film directed by Uli Edel (2004), like Reinl's film an international co-production. Max von Sydow, who played the lead in the greatest film with a medieval subject, Ingmar Bergman's

[30] Lotte Eisner, *Fritz Lang* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1976; repr. 1986), 76.

[31] Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, *The German Cinema* (London: J. M. Dent, 1971), 24.

The Seventh Seal (1957), plays Eyvind the smith, Siegfried's foster-father—not a figure familiar from the saga. A sample of the dialogue will suffice to convey the film's banality. Brunhilde has initiated Siegfried into love, and invites him to Iceland:

SIEGFRIED: How will I find you in Iceland? There must be lots of Brunhildes there.
BRUNHILDE: Yes, but only one who is Queen of Iceland.

Yet despite the vicissitudes of its reception, more people now read the *Nibelungenlied* than at any time in its history, and its place in world literature is secure.

NOTE ON THE TEXT AND TRANSLATION

THIS translation is based on the edition by Karl Bartsch in the 'Deutsche Classiker' series, which first appeared in 1870; it was revised by Helmut de Boor in 1940, and after de Boor's death in 1976 reprinted with a revised introduction and bibliography by Roswitha Wisniewski (1979, 1988). Bartsch based his text on manuscript B (St Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, cod. 857). Other editions and facsimiles have been adduced, and their variant readings very occasionally preferred, as indicated in the notes. On several occasions Bartsch's readings have been preferred to those of de Boor.

The strophe numbers in the margin derive from the Bartsch/de Boor edition and are intended to aid the student who wishes to read the text in conjunction with the Middle High German. The same applies to the division into thirty-nine 'Adventures'.

The style of the lay is uneven and was in some measure archaic, even at the time when it was written down. Transposing it into modern English prose inevitably means some loss of the timbre of the original. This translation tries to stay as close as possible to the MHG text. Heroic epic brings with it its own characteristic diction, and there are limits to the extent to which it is possible to bend the style in the direction of modern idiom, living as we do in what few people would venture to describe as a heroic age.

Some stylistic devices defy the translator altogether. That known by the Greek term *apo koinu*, the linking of two clauses by the same subject, is one such. For example, in strophe 2271 a literal rendering would be: 'Then he wanted to leap at him, but Hildebrant, his uncle, would not permit him grasped him firmly to him.' Hildebrant is the subject of both main clauses. Postposed epithets are less of a problem. In strophe 2325 Dietrich is described as *der helt guot* (literally: 'the hero worthy'). This appellative introduces two further problems. The noun *helt* has been rendered as 'hero', even if on occasions this clashes with actions which are far from heroic. The lay has a large number of such designations at its disposal, of which the most frequently recurring, apart from *helt*, are *degen*, *ritter*, *recke*, and *wîgant*. The terms *degen* and *ritter* are generally rendered as 'knight', although that better befits *ritter*, the new rank of *miles* that

evolved in the twelfth century,[1] whereas *degen* is a more archaic word. The terms *recke* and *wîgant* are rendered as 'warrior' and 'fighting man'; like *helt*, they had by 1200 an archaic ring to them. Modern English simply does not have sufficient synonyms in this field. The same problem applies, to a lesser extent, to laudatory epithets such as *guot*, *küene*, *snel*, *balt*, *gemeit*, *ûz erwelt*: 'worthy', 'bold', 'brave', 'courageous', 'valiant', 'gallant', 'excellent'. These are often qualified by the adverb *vil* ('very', 'most'). These epithets and appellatives are an integral part of the style of the lay.

Sometimes the syntax of the translation has had to move away from the original; rhyme-compulsion often determines the order of the MHG clauses or sentences. The short sentences, the constant use of parataxis, are part and parcel of the original style, and are retained wherever possible.

[1] On the problems of rank and terminology see W. H. Jackson, *Chivalry in Twelfth-Century Germany. The Works of Hartmann von Aue*, Arthurian Studies, 34 (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1994), esp. 37–43.

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CHRONOLOGY

[*NL* = the *Nibelungenlied*]

437	Death of Gundaharius, Burgundian king, together with his family and 20,000 of his men, in battle against Huns, perhaps in the employ of Aetius, Roman governor of Gaul.
c.445	Bleda (Blœdelin in *NL*), leader of the Huns, is murdered by his younger brother Attila.
453	Death of Attila the Hun (Etzel in *NL*).
454–526	Theodoric the Great (Dietrich of Bern in *NL*).
523	Death of King Sigismund of Burgundy.
567	Brunihildis, Brunhild (=? Prünhilt in *NL*), Visigothic princess, marries Sigebert of Metz (=? Sivrit in *NL*). Ruled Burgundy from 599 to 613.
575	Murder of Sigebert of Metz by emissaries of Queen Fredegund.
613	Queen Brunhild tortured to death.
c.1200	The *NL* is written down, probably by an Austrian poet.
c.1225–50	The oldest surviving *NL* manuscripts: St Gall, Cod. 857 (MS B); Donaueschingen codex, Cod. 63 (MS C), now in the Badische Landesbibliothek, Karlsruhe; fragment Z, Klagenfurt UB Perg. Hs. 46; fragment E, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Fragm. 44.
c.1275–1300	MS A, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Cgm 34.
1551, 1557	Publication by Wolfgang Lazius of some strophes from MS C (now lost).
1755	Jakob Hermann Obereit rediscovers MS C of the *Nibelungenlied* in the library of the Count of Hohenems.
1756	Johann Jakob Bodmer publishes the last third of MS C.
1768	Rediscovery of MS B in St Gall Stiftsbibliothek.
1779	Rediscovery of MS A in the Hohenems library.
1782	First complete edition of *NL* by Christoph Heinrich Müller (or Myller), based on MSS A and C.
1807–16	Three editions of *NL* by Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen.

1826	*Der Nibelunge Not und die Klage*, edited by Karl Lachmann, based on MS A.
1848–74	Richard Wagner's composition of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*.
1855–62	Friedrich Hebbel's trilogy, *Die Nibelungen*.
1866	Karl Bartsch's first edition of the *NL* in the Deutsche Classiker series, based on MS B.
1923–4	Fritz Lang's two-part film *Die Nibelungen*.

THE NIBELUNGENLIED

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FIRST ADVENTURE*

OF KRIEMHILT*

In ancient tales many marvels are told us: of renowned heroes, of great hardship, of joys, festivities, of weeping and lamenting, of bold warriors' battles—now *you* may hear such marvels told!* 1

There grew up in Burgundy a most noble maiden.* No one in all the lands* could be fairer. She was called Kriemhilt—she grew to be a beautiful woman. For her sake many knights were to lose their lives. 2
Wooing became that lovely maiden well. Bold warriors sought her love—no one wished her ill. Her noble form was beautiful beyond measure. The damsel's virtues were an ornament to all other women. 3

Three kings, noble and powerful, were her guardians: Gunther and Gernot, those renowned warriors, and young Giselher, an outstanding knight. The lady was their sister—the princes had her in their care. 4

Those lords were munificent, of high-born lineage, outstanding warriors possessing armies of boldness beyond measure. Burgundy was the name of their land. In time to come they wrought great marvels in Etzel's land. They resided with their armies in Worms by the 5
Rhine. Many proud knights from their lands served them with honour and renown until their end came. They afterwards died wretchedly because of two noble ladies' enmity. 6

Their mother, a powerful queen, was called Lady Uote. Their father was called Dancrat, a man rich in courage, who bequeathed them their inheritance on his death—in his youth he had also won great repute. 7

The three kings were, as I have said, of very great courage. Subject to them were also the best warriors of whom tale has ever been told, strong and valiant, undaunted in fierce battles. These were Hagen of 8
Tronege, and also his brother, valiant Dancwart; Ortwin of Metz; the two margraves* Gere and Ekkewart; Volker of Alzey, never lacking in courage; Rumolt, the master of the kitchen, an outstanding knight; 9
Sindolt and Hunolt, those lords who had charge of the court and its repute—they were vassals of the three kings. They had many other warriors whose names I cannot tell. 10

Dancwart was marshal, and his kinsman, Ortwin of Metz, was the king's steward. Sindolt, an outstanding knight, was cup-bearer.

11 Hunolt was chamberlain.* They knew how to act with high honour. No one, indeed, could ever give you a full and true account of that court's might and far-reaching power, of its most high dignity and of
12 its chivalry, joyfully practised by those lords all their lives.

Living in such high honour, Kriemhilt dreamt how she reared a falcon, strong, handsome, and wild, which two eagles tore asunder
13 before her eyes. No greater sorrow could ever befall her in this world. She told her dream then to her mother Uote. She could offer the good maiden no better interpretation than this: 'The falcon you are rearing is a noble man. Unless God deigns to preserve him, you will
14 soon have lost him.'

'What are you saying to me about a man, my dearest mother? I wish to be forever free of a warrior's love. I desire to remain as fair as
15 this until my death, never earning anguish for love of a man.'

'Now, do not protest too much,' replied her mother. 'If you're ever to feel heartfelt happiness in this world, it will happen because of a man's love. You will become a beautiful wife, if God grants you some
16 day a truly worthy knight as a husband.'

'Let such words be,' she said. 'My lady, so often it has been shown, with regard to many women, how joy in the end may be rewarded by sorrow. I must avoid them both, and then no ill fate can ever
17 befall me.'

Kriemhilt, in her own mind, renounced love entirely. After that the most virtuous maiden lived for many a happy day, not knowing anyone who wished to woo her. Yet there came a time when she
18 became, in all honour, wife to a most valiant warrior.

It was he who was the very falcon that she saw in her dream, which her mother interpreted to her. How harshly she avenged him upon her closest kinsmen, who were to slay him! Because of that one man's
19 death, many a mother's child died.

SECOND ADVENTURE

OF SIVRIT

THERE grew up in the Netherlands at that time a noble king's son, whose father was called Sigmunt, his mother Siglint. This was in a prosperous citadel, well known far and wide, low down by the

Rhine—it was called Xanten. Sivrit was the name of that bold, worthy knight. He put many realms to the test, so great was his courage. Rejoicing in his strength, he rode into many lands. Ah, what bold knights he afterwards found in Burgundy! 20 21

In his best times, in his young days, many marvels might be told of Sivrit: how his reputation grew, and how handsome he was. Afterwards women of great beauty came to love him. He was brought up with such care as well befitted him. What knightly qualities he acquired, being naturally disposed towards them! His father's lands came to be adorned by this, everyone finding him so truly noble in all respects. 22 23

Now he had reached the right age for riding to court. The people were glad to see him. Many a lady and maiden wished that he would always feel disposed to go there. A good many grew fond of him, as the lord well observed. 24

They very rarely let the boy ride without a guard.* Sigmunt and Siglint ordered that he be elegantly dressed. The wise men of the court, knowledgeable in matters of reputation, also took care of him. Thus he proved well capable of winning for himself both the people and the land. By now his strength was such that he was well capable of bearing arms. He had ample supply of all he needed for that. He began to woo, astutely, beautiful women. It was a high honour for them to make love to bold Sivrit. 25 26

Then his father, Sigmunt, proclaimed to his vassals that he wanted to hold a festivity among his dear friends. Those tidings were then taken into other kings' lands. He gave chargers and good garments to strangers and acquaintances alike. Wherever any were found who might be made knights by virtue of their lineage, those noble children were invited to the land for the festivity. They afterwards took sword* together with the young king. 27 28

Marvels might be told of that festivity. Sigmunt and Siglint were well capable of acquiring much honour by their lavish hospitality; their hands dealt out many gifts. In consequence many strangers were seen to ride into their land. 29

Four hundred squires were to take sword and wear knights' clothing together with Sivrit. Great numbers of fair maidens were busy at their work, for they held him dear. The ladies laid many precious stones into the gold, which they wanted to work with braids into the garments of the proud young knights—that could not be omitted. 30

The host then bade seats be set up for bold men in great numbers at the summer solstice, when his son gained a knight's name in
31 splendour.

Then wealthy squires in great numbers and many noble knights went into a minster. The old and wise men did right to serve the young and foolish, as had been done for them before. They took
32 pleasure in this, and also had hopes of great joy to come.

Then, to honour God, they sang a mass. A great press of people arose where they became knights, according to knightly law, with such a display of high honour as may in all likelihood never happen
33 again.

They ran to where they found many warhorses saddled. At Sigmunt's court the bohort* grew so great that the palace and great hall were heard to echo with the sound. Those high-spirited knights cre-
34 ated a mighty clamour. Many a charge was to be heard, undertaken by old and young alike, the splitting of shafts resounding in the air. Splinters were seen to fly far beyond the great hall, the work of many
35 a warrior's hands—skill was at work there!

The host asked that the fighting should cease. Then the warhorses were reared in. A great many sturdy shield-buckles were seen to be shattered there, many precious stones felled onto the grass from the
36 bright shields' bosses—the charges had brought all that about.

Then the host's guests went to where they had been assigned their seats. Noble food in plenty parted them from their weariness, together with the very best of wine, brought in for them in great quantities. Ample hospitality was offered there to strangers and acquaintances
37 alike. Though the nobles enjoyed their pastimes all the day long, many travelling people* took no rest. They served to earn gifts, which were to be found in plenty there. Therefore all Sigmunt's land
38 was adorned with praise.

Lord Sigmunt bade young Sivrit confer lands and castles in fief, as he himself had done before. Sivrit's hands then gave many gifts to his fellow sword-bearers. They were happy then that they had
39 made their journey into that land. The festivity lasted until the seventh day. Wealthy Siglint, following old custom, gave away red gold for love of her son. She well knew how to earn the people's
40 favour for him.

Very few travelling people were found in poverty there. Chargers and clothing flew from the nobles' hands, as if it were the last

day of their lives! No household, I believe, ever practised such great generosity. Amid great renown the festivity ended. Afterwards the 41
powerful nobles were heard to say that they wanted to have the young prince for their lord. Sivrit, that most handsome man, wanted nothing of that. Since both Sigmunt and Siglint were still alive, their dear 42
son had no wish to wear a crown. Yet he desired to be lord there and prevail against any attacks that the bold and courageous knight feared might be made in the lands. 43

THIRD ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT CAME TO WORMS

SELDOM did any heart's grief trouble that lord. He heard tidings of how there was in Burgundy a beautiful maiden, of perfect loveliness, from whom he was in time to come to gain great joy, but also suffering. Her incomparable beauty was known far and wide, and 44
many a hero discerned the damsel's high spirits at that time. This attracted many strangers to Gunther's land. No matter how many 45
wooers were seen to seek her love, Kriemhilt never, in her own mind, admitted to herself that she wanted any of them for a lover. He to whom she afterwards became subject was still very much a stranger to her. 46

Then Siglint's son's thoughts turned to noble love.* All the others' wooing was as nothing compared with his. He was well capable of earning a beautiful lady. In time to come noble Kriemhilt became bold Sivrit's wife. 47

His kinsmen and plenty of his vassals advised him, since his thoughts were bent upon constant love, that he should woo one who might befit him. Then bold Sivrit said: 'In that case I will take Kriemhilt, the beautiful damsel of Burgundy, because of her 48
incomparable beauty. I know full well that no emperor who wanted a wife ever grew so powerful that it would not become him to love that wealthy queen.' 49

Sigmunt came to hear these tidings. His people talked about it, which is how he came to know of his son's wishes—it was a great sorrow to him that he wanted to woo that most noble maiden. 50
Siglint, the noble king's wife, also came to hear it. She was very

concerned for her son, for she was well acquainted with Gunther and his vassals. They tried their hardest to deter the knight from
51 his wooing.

Then bold Sivrit said: 'My beloved father, I would always remain without a noble lady's love unless I were to woo one for whom my heart holds very great love.* No matter what anyone may say, there
52 is nothing else for it.'

'If you will not change your mind,' the king replied, 'then I truly rejoice in your wishes, and will help you to carry them out as best as I possibly can. Yet King Gunther has haughty vassals in great num-
53 bers. Were there none other but Sir Hagen, he knows how to practise pride in his arrogance, so that I very much fear it may cost us dear if
54 we wish to woo that most noble maiden.'

'How can that hinder us?' replied Sivrit. 'What I cannot obtain from them by friendly request, my hands may win there by my
55 valour. I trust I can win both people and land from them by force.'

Then Prince Sigmunt said: 'Your words trouble me, for if these tidings were told by the Rhine, you would never be permitted to ride into that land. I have long been acquainted with Gunther and
56 Gernot. No one can win that maiden by force,' said King Sigmunt.* 'I have this on good authority. Yet if you wish to ride with warriors
57 into that land, then such friends as we have will soon be sent for.'

'I do not intend', Sivrit replied, 'that warriors should accompany me to the Rhine on any campaign to win that fairest of maidens
58 by force—that would be very much against my wishes. My own hands alone will be well capable of winning her there. I will go with twelve others* into Gunther's land. You must help me in this, father Sigmunt.'

59 Then they gave to his knights grey and coloured garments.* His mother Siglint then also came to hear of these tidings. She grew sad, fearing to lose her dear son at the hands of Gunther's men. The noble
60 queen wept full sorely.

Lord Sivrit walked over to her. He spoke kind words to his mother: 'Lady, you must not weep for my sake. Indeed, I am free of
61 all fear of any fighting man. Help me on my journey into Burgundy, so that I and my warriors may have such garments as proud heroes may
62 honourably wear. I shall be truly grateful to you for that, rest assured.'

'Since you will not change your mind,' said Lady Siglint, 'then I will help you on your journey, my only child, with the best garments

a knight ever wore, for you and your companions. You shall have plenty of them to take with you.' 63

Young Sivrit then bowed to the queen. He said: 'I will have no more than twelve warriors with me on the journey. Have garments prepared for them. I look forward to seeing how things stand with regard to Kriemhilt.' 64

Then fair ladies sat night and day, few of them taking any rest, until Sivrit's garments had been wrought. He would on no account abandon his journey. His father ordered that the knightly garb with 65 which he wanted to depart from Sigmunt's land be well adorned, and gleaming breastplates were also made ready for them, together with sturdy helmets and beautiful, broad shields. 66

Then the time for their journey to Burgundy drew near. Both men and women grew anxious about them, worrying whether they would ever return to their homeland. The heroes ordered that both their armour and garments should be loaded onto packhorses. Their 67 horses were handsome, their harness red with gold. If anyone alive had greater pride than Sivrit and his men, then there was no need for it. He then asked for leave to depart for Burgundy. It was with sad 68 feelings that the king and his wife gave their consent. He then consoled them both with affection. He said: 'You must not weep for my sake. You must always be free of any anxiety for me.' 69

The warriors grieved; many a maiden also wept. I believe that their hearts had rightly told them that so many of their friends would lie dead in consequence. It was only right that they then lamented—they had good reason to do so. 70

On the seventh morning after that the valiant warriors rode to the shore by Worms. All their garments were of red gold, their harness well-favoured. Their chargers walked at an even pace, those of bold Sivrit's men. Their shields were new, bright, and broad, and their 71 helmets most handsome, when valiant Sivrit rode to court there, into Gunther's land. Never were heroes seen to wear such splendid garments. The points of their swords reached down to their spurs. 72 Those outstanding knights carried sharp javelins. The one that Sivrit bore was some two spans* broad, its blades cutting with a most fearsome edge. They held the gold-coloured bridles in their hands. Their 73 horses' breast-straps were of silk. Thus they arrived in Burgundy. The people everywhere gaped at the sight. Then many of Gunther's men ran towards them. Those proud warriors, knights and squires, went to 74

meet those lords, as was only right, and welcomed those strangers into their lords' land, taking their horses from them and their shields from
75 their hands. They wanted to lead the chargers away to the stables. Valiant Sivrit was quick to speak then: 'Let the horses stand alongside us, by me and my men. We want to depart from here soon, so
76 I fully intend. If anyone knows where I may find the king, most powerful Gunther of Burgundy, let him tell me.' Then one of them who
77 knew all about it told him.

'If you wish to find the lord, that can come about easily enough. I saw him there in that spacious hall, together with his heroes—you must make your way over there. You may find great numbers of
78 proud vassals with him there.'

By now the tidings had been told to the king that most gallant knights had arrived there, wearing shining breastplates and splendid
79 garments. No one in Burgundy recognized them. The king wondered where those noble knights in their bright garments and with such good shields, new and broad, had come from. It irked Gunther that
80 no one could tell him.

Ortwin of Metz, who was reputed to be mighty and bold, replied to the king: 'Since we recognize none of them, you must have
81 my uncle Hagen come—have him see them. The kingdoms and foreign lands are all well known to him. If he has knowledge of these lords, he will tell us.'

The king asked that he and his men be brought. They saw him
82 walk nobly to court with his warriors. Hagen asked what the king wanted of him.

'There are knights in my castle, strangers to us, whom no one here recognizes. If you have ever seen them, Hagen, tell me in truth who
83 they are.'

'I will do so,' said Hagen. He then walked over to a window. He turned his eye,* then, upon the strangers. Both their bearing and their garments pleased him well. They were complete strangers to him,
84 there in Burgundy. He said that wherever those warriors had come from to the Rhine, they might be princes themselves, or princes' messengers. Their chargers were handsome, their garments excellent.
85 No matter where they had travelled from, they were high-spirited.

Hagen then spoke as follows: 'I would go so far as to say, although I have never seen Sivrit, that I do indeed believe that he is the
86 warrior who walks so proudly there, whatever his purpose may be.

He is bringing new tidings into this land.' Hagen went on: 'That hero's hands slew the bold Nibelungs, Schilbunc and Nibelunc, those powerful king's sons.* Thereafter he achieved mighty marvels by his great strength. When the hero was riding alone, without any 87
assistance, he found bold men in great numbers at the foot of a mountain, standing by the hoard of Nibelunc, so I am reliably informed. They were as yet strangers to him, until he made their acquaintance there. The entire hoard of the Nibelungs had all been 88
carried out of a hollow hill. Now hear marvels told of how the men of the Nibelungs wanted to share it out. Sir Sivrit saw that—the hero wondered at it. He came so close to them that he could see the heroes, 89
and the knights could see him, too. One amongst them said: "Here comes mighty Sivrit, the hero of the Netherlands." He found very strange tidings among the Nibelungs. Schilbunc and Nibelunc gave 90
the warrior a good welcome. By common consent the young, noble princes asked the handsome man to share out the treasure among them, imploring him to do so. The lord promised them that he would. 91
He saw so many precious stones, so we hear tell, that a hundred waggons could not carry them—more still of the red gold of the land of the Nibelungs. Bold Sivrit's hands were to share all this out among them. Then they gave him as a reward Nibelunc's sword. They were 92
rewarded very ill for the service that Sivrit, the worthy hero, was to perform for them there. He couldn't put an end to the dispute—they were in an angry mood. 93

They had twelve bold men among their friends there who were mighty giants. What did that avail them? Next Sivrit in his anger slew them with his hands, and he forced into submission seven hundred men of the land of the Nibelungs, with the good sword which 94
was called Balmunc. Because of the mighty fear that great numbers of young warriors had of that sword and its bold bearer, they made the land and its castles subject to him. Moreover, he slew both the 95
powerful kings.

After that he met with great danger from Albrich, who wanted to avenge his lords at once there, until he found what great strength Sivrit possessed. The strong dwarf could not match him in battle 96
then. Like wild lions they ran to the mountain, where he afterwards gained the cloak of invisibility from Albrich. Then Sivrit, that fearsome fighter, became lord over the hoard. Those who had dared to 97
fight there all lay slain. He quickly gave the order that the treasure be

carried and carted to the cave from which Nibelunc's men had previously taken it. Mighty Albrich then became chamberlain in charge
98 of the treasure. He had to swear oaths to serve Sivrit as his vassal. He was ready to do his bidding in all things.' Those were Hagen of Tronege's words. 'That is what he has achieved. Never did any
99 warrior gain such great strength. I know yet more about him: that hero's hands slew a dragon. He bathed in the blood—his skin turned
100 horny. Therefore no sword can cut him, as has often been shown. We must give the lord a good welcome to avoid earning the young warrior's enmity in any way. He is so bold that he ought to be kept on friendly terms. He has performed so many marvels, thanks to his
101 great strength.'

Then the powerful king said: 'You may well be right. Look now, how warrior-like he stands, ready for battle, both he and his knights—
102 that valiant man. We must go down to him, to meet the warrior.'

'You may do so without dishonour,' replied Hagen. 'He is of noble kin, a powerful king's son. He stands there with such an air that, Christ knows, it seems to me that no small matters have caused him
103 to ride here!'

Then the king of that land said: 'Now let him be welcome here. He is noble and bold, as I have clearly heard. Nor shall he lose by that in Burgundy.'

104 Then Lord Gunther walked over to Sivrit. The host and his warriors gave the stranger such a welcome that very little was lacking in their courtesy. The handsome man bowed to them in thanks for their
105 having greeted him so splendidly.

'I wonder, noble Sivrit, where you have come from,' said the king at once, 'riding into this land, or what your purpose is in Worms by the Rhine.'

Then the stranger said to the king: 'That shall not be concealed
106 from you. In my father's land I was told that alongside you here are the boldest warriors that a king ever gained—I'd gladly learn if this is true! I've heard a great deal about this. That is why I have come
107 here. Moreover, I have heard such bravery imputed to you yourself that no bolder king may ever have been seen. People talk much about this all over these lands. Now I will not rest until I have found this
108 out for myself. I am also a warrior and was myself to wear a crown.* I would have it that people say of me that I rightfully possess both people and land. My honour, and my head, too, shall be the pledge

for that. Now you are so bold, so I am told, that I don't care whether 109
anyone likes it or not—I will win by force from you all that you may
have. Your lands and castles shall be subject to me!' 110

The king marvelled, as did his men, at what they heard there, that Sivrit was intent on taking his lands from him. His knights heard this—at that, anger made their acquaintance. 111

'How might I have deserved,' said Sir Gunther, 'that we should lose what my father long maintained in all honour by any one man's strength? That would be a poor way for us to show that we also practise chivalry.' 112

'I will have it no other way,' said bold Sivrit. 'Unless your land can be protected by your valour, I shall rule over it all, as well as my own inheritance. If you win that by your strength, then it shall all be subject to you. Your inheritance, and mine also, shall be equally at 113
stake. Whichever one of us can vanquish the other shall have all serve him, both people and lands.'

Gernot and Hagen objected at once. 'We have no intention', said 114
Gernot then, 'of forcing any lands into submission, with people lying dead in the cause at a hero's hands. We possess rich lands: they serve us by right—they could not be in any better keeping.' 115

Gunther's allies stood there in a grim mood. Among them also was Ortwin of Metz. He said: 'This appeasement grieves me greatly. Mighty Sivrit has declared hostilities against you without cause. 116
Even if you and your brothers did not possess such strong defences, and if Sivrit had led a whole king's army here, I would be confident of doing battle so well that this bold man would be given good cause to abandon such great arrogance.' 117

That greatly enraged the hero of the Netherlands. He said: 'You have no right to presume to do battle against me. I am a powerful king, but you are a king's vassal. In any case, twelve of your like could never take me on in battle!' 118

Then Ortwin of Metz called out loudly for swords—it was easy to see he was Hagen of Tronege's sister's son. That Hagen himself kept silent for so long grieved the king.

Then Gernot, that bold and gallant knight, intervened. He said 119
to Ortwin: 'Let your anger be. Lord Sivrit has not done us any such wrong that we may not still readily settle the matter in a courteous way—that's my counsel—and have him be our ally. That would give us still greater renown.' 120

Then mighty Hagen said: 'We may well have cause to regret, as may also all your knights, that he ever rode to the Rhine in search of battle here. He should not have done so. My lords had done him no
121 such wrongs as might merit this.'

Sivrit, that mighty man, replied: 'If what I have said troubles you, Sir Hagen, then I shall let it be shown that these hands of mine want
122 to wield great mastery here in Burgundy!'

'I alone shall forestall that,' said Gernot in reply. He then forbade all his knights to speak any haughty words that might anger him.

123 Sivrit's thoughts, for his part, then turned to the noble maiden.

'How would it become us to do battle with you?' continued Gernot. 'No matter how many warriors would inevitably lie dead in consequence, we'd win small honour by it and you very little profit.'

124 Sivrit, King Sigmunt's son, replied to him: 'Why is Hagen tarrying, and Ortwin also, not hastening to do battle along with his friends, so many of whom he has here in Burgundy?'

125 They had to leave off such talk—that was Gernot's counsel. 'We bid you welcome here,' said Uote's son,* 'along with your companions-in-arms who have come with you. We shall willingly serve you, I and my kinsmen.'

126 Then they bade that Gunther's wine be poured out for the guests. The lord of the land then said: 'All that we possess, if it is honourable for you to wish for it, shall be at your disposal, and let our men and our possessions be shared with you.' At that Lord Sivrit grew some-
127 what more gently disposed towards them.

They then ordered that all their garments be put in safe-keeping. Lodgings were sought, the best to be found, for Sivrit's squires. They gave them good quarters. After that the guest was gladly seen
128 amongst the Burgundians there.

For many days thereafter he was offered great honour—a thousand times more than I can tell you. His valour had earned him that, you may well believe. There was scarcely anyone who saw him who
129 was hostile towards him. The kings, and their men also, indulged in pastimes. Sivrit was always the best, no matter what they undertook there. No one could match him, so great was his strength, when they
130 threw the stone or shot the shaft.* Whenever, in their courtesy, those most gallant knights were passing their time among the ladies, they were always delighted to see the hero of the Netherlands there. He
131 had bent his mind on noble love.

He was always ready for any enterprise. He bore in his mind a lovely maiden, and, in return, one lady whom he had never yet seen bore him in mind, one who very often spoke kindly of him in private. 132

Whenever the young people, knights and squires, wanted to play their games in the courtyard, Kriemhilt, the noble queen, watched this very often through the windows. She had no need of any other pastime in those days. 133

If he knew that she whom he bore in his heart was watching him, it would have been ample pastime for him forever. If his eyes were to see her, I know full well that nothing in this world could have pleased him more. Whenever he stood among the heroes in the courtyard, 134 as people still do for pastime's sake, Siglint's son stood so winningly that in days to come many ladies loved him from their hearts. 135

Yet many times he thought: 'How is it to come about that I may see the noble maiden with my own eyes? She whom I love from my heart, and have long done so, is still as yet very much a stranger to me—that causes me sadness.' 136

Whenever the powerful kings rode into their lands,* the warriors all had to ride with them, without delay. Sivrit had to go also, which grieved the lady. For his part, he often suffered much sorrow for love of her. Thus he lived among those lords in Gunther's land for a full 137 year, if truth be told, without ever seeing the lovely princess in all that time—she through whom much joy was to befall him thereafter, but also much grief. 138

FOURTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT FOUGHT AGAINST THE SAXONS

Now strange tidings neared Gunther's land, brought by messengers sent to them there from afar, by unknown warriors who bore the Burgundians enmity. There is no denying that they were troubled when they heard of this. 139

I will tell you the names of their foes: they were Liudeger, a powerful, proud prince from the land of the Saxons, and also King Liudegast of Denmark. They gathered together proud strangers in great numbers for their campaign. Their messengers had 140

arrived in Gunther's land, sent there by his antagonists. Then those strangers were asked what tidings they had brought. The messengers
141 were soon told to go before the king at court.

He greeted them with great courtesy, saying: 'Welcome. I have not heard who has sent you here—let that be told,' said the noble king.
142 Then they were greatly afraid of grim Gunther's mood.

'If you will allow us, King, to tell you the tidings we bring you here, then we shall not remain silent. We will name to you the lords who have sent us here: Liudegast and Liudeger want to invade your
143 land. You have merited their wrath. Indeed, we have clearly heard that both those lords bear great enmity towards you. They want to bring their armies on an expedition to Worms on the Rhine. Many
144 knights will come to their aid—take my word for it. The campaign is bound to take place within twelve weeks. If you have any good allies who can help you defend your castles and your land, let that soon be shown. Helmets and shield-rims* in great numbers will
145 be hewn to pieces here by my lords. Or, if you wish to come to an agreement with them, then send a message to them, and then those numerous bands of your mighty enemies, intent on causing you heartfelt suffering, will not ride so near you and cause many worthy
146 knights to perish.'

'Now wait a while,' said the worthy king, 'until I have thought further on this. I'll tell you my intentions then. If I have any loyal followers, I must not keep this from them. I must make complaint to
147 my allies about these grave tidings.'

Gunther, that most powerful king, was more than a little distressed. He kept this matter secret in his heart. He ordered Hagen and others of his vassals to be sent for, and also asked that Gernot be fetched
148 from court immediately.

Then all the best to be found there arrived. Gunther said: 'They want to invade our land with mighty forces—you must not take this lightly!'
149 Gernot, a bold and gallant knight, answered: 'We shall put a stop to that with swords! Only the doomed will die then—let them lie dead. I shall not forget my honour on that account. Let our enemies
150 be bade welcome!'

Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'That does not seem good to me. Liudegast and Liudeger are full of arrogance. We cannot send for our forces in such a short time.' The bold warrior added: 'Why don't you
151 tell Sivrit about this?'

They ordered lodgings to be found for the messengers in the town. No matter how hostile they were towards them, powerful Gunther asked that they be given the best of care—that was only right and proper—until he had found what allies would stand by him in this.

Yet the king was greatly troubled by these anxieties. Then a most 152
gallant knight who could have no knowledge of what had happened to him saw him in a sad mood—he asked King Gunther to tell him of the tidings. 153

'I wonder greatly,' said Sivrit then, 'that the joyful bearing you have maintained for a long time now amongst us is so altered.'

Gunther, that most gallant knight, answered: 'Indeed I cannot tell 154
everybody the sorrows I must secretly bear in my heart. It is only to constant friends that one should lament the sorrows of one's heart.'

Sivrit's complexion turned pale and then red at this. He said to 155
the king: 'I've never refused you anything. I shall help you to dispel all your troubles. If you are looking for allies, then I shall be one of them, and trust I can fulfil my promises honourably, to the end of my days.' 156

'Now God reward you, Sir Sivrit—I like the sound of those words, and even if your courage never comes to my aid, I am still pleased to hear that you hold me so dear. If I live a while longer, you will be well rewarded for this. I will tell you why I am so sad. From my enemies' 157
messengers I have heard that they want to campaign against me with their armies here. No knights ever did that before to us here in these lands.' 158

'Let that be of little concern to you,' Sivrit replied, 'and rest easy. Do as I ask: let me win honour and gain for you, and ask your knights to come to your aid also. Even if your mighty enemies had thirty 159
thousand knights helping them, I would take them on if I had only a thousand. Depend on me for that.'

King Gunther answered: 'I shall be forever indebted to you for this.' 160

'In that case order a thousand of your men to be brought to me, since I have only twelve of my warriors with me—then I will defend your land. Sivrit's hands will always serve you loyally. Hagen, 161
and also Ortwin, must help us, and Dancwart and Sindolt, your dear warriors. Valiant Volker must also ride with us. He must carry the banner—I know none better. And let the messengers ride home to 162
their lords' lands. Let them be told that they shall see us soon, and that our castles shall then be left in peace.'

163 The king then sent for both his kinsmen and vassals. Liudeger's messengers then came to court. They were delighted that they were to go home. Then worthy King Gunther offered them rich gifts and
164 gave them his escort—they were in high spirits at that. 'Now tell my mighty enemies', said Gunther then, 'that their forces may as well stay at home, but if they wish to invade my lands, they will meet with
165 hardship, unless I run out of allies.'

Rich gifts were then brought before the messengers; Gunther had ample store of those to give them. Liudeger's men did not dare refuse
166 them. When they had taken their leave, they departed joyfully.

When the messengers had arrived in Denmark and King Liudegast had heard what news they had brought from the Rhine, there is no denying that he was angry at the Burgundians' great
167 arrogance, when he was told of it. The messengers said that the Burgundians had bold men in great numbers. Moreover, they had seen a warrior standing amongst them who was called Sivrit, a hero from the Netherlands. Liudegast was far from pleased when he
168 heard those tidings. When the men of Denmark heard this, they then hastened to assemble even more allies, until Sir Liudegast had gathered from amongst his bold men twenty thousand knights for
169 his campaign.

Then King Liudeger of Saxony also sent out for more men, until they had forty thousand and more, with whom they wanted to ride into Burgundy. By then, back at home here, King Gunther
170 had also sent for allies, together with his kinsmen and his brothers' vassals, whom they wished to lead into battle, along with Hagen's warriors, of whom the heroes had need. Knights were afterwards
171 fated to meet with death by this.

They made preparations for the campaign. When they were about to set off, valiant Volker was charged with carrying the banner when they rode from Worms across the Rhine. Hagen of Tronege
172 was made captain of the troops. Sindolt and Hunolt also rode with them, men well able to earn Gunther's gold. Dancwart, Hagen's brother, and Ortwin, too, could claim honourable places in the
173 expedition.

'Sir King, stay at home here,' said Sivrit then, 'since your warriors want to follow me. Remain among the ladies and be of high spirits. I am
174 fully confident of preserving both your honour and your possessions. As for those who wanted to attack you here in Worms on the Rhine,

I shall guard against that—they may as well stay at home. We shall ride so close to their lands that their pride will be turned into sorrow.' 175

From the Rhine they rode through Hessen with their heroes, towards the land of the Saxons; there battle was afterwards done. With pillage and fire they laid waste to the land, to the grief of the two princes when they learned of it. They came to the border; 176 the squires drew away.*

Sivrit, that most mighty warrior, asked: 'Who is now to guard our retinue here?' Never did a mounted charge cause greater harm to the Saxons.

They said: 'Let bold Dancwart guard the young folk* on the roads—he is a valiant knight. That way we shall lose all the fewer at the hands of Liudeger's men. Let him and Ortwin have charge of the rearguard here.' 178

'In that case I will ride ahead myself,' said Sivrit the warrior, 'and will be the vanguard, on the lookout for our foes until I find out for certain where those warriors are.' Then fair Siglint's son was quickly armed. He commended the army to Hagen as he set off, and to 179 Gernot, that valiant man. Then he rode off alone into the land of the Saxons. Hence many helmet-straps were to be hewn to pieces by him that day. 180

He saw the huge army that lay encamped on the plain, out of all proportion to the numbers of his allies—there were a good forty thousand of them, or even more. Sivrit, in high spirits, was delighted to see that. 181

They, for their part, also had a warrior who had come out on the watch for the enemy there—he was armed to the teeth. Lord Sivrit saw him, and the bold man also saw Sivrit. Each eyed the other with hostility. I'll tell you who it was who kept watch there: a bright shield 182 of gold lay by his hand—it was King Liudegast! He was guarding his army. Sivrit, that most noble stranger, galloped magnificently up to him. Now Sir Liudegast had also caught sight of his foe. They 183 both dug their spurs into their chargers' sides. They lowered their lances, aiming to hit their opponents' shields with all their power. That gave the powerful king great cause for concern. After the collision 184 the chargers carried the two powerful princes past one another, as if blown by the wind. With their reins they wheeled the horses away in most knightly fashion. The two fierce men tried their fortunes with swords.* Then Lord Sivrit struck such a blow that all the plain 185

resounded. From Liudegast's helmet the flame-red sparks flew up then, as if out of great fires, at that blow from the hero's hands. Each
186 met his match in the other. Sir Liudegast, for his part, struck great numbers of fierce blows against Sivrit. Both their shields bore a heavy burden because of their valour. Thirty of Liudegast's men were on patrol nearby, but before they could come to him, Sivrit, however, had
187 won the victory by striking three mighty wounds through the king's shining breastplate, good though it was. The sword's blades brought
188 forth blood from his wounds. King Liudegast was devastated. He asked that he might be allowed to live and offered Sivrit his lands,* telling him he was called Liudegast. Then his warriors arrived—they
189 had clearly seen what had taken place between those two lookouts.

Sivrit wanted to lead Liudegast away, but then he was charged at by thirty of his men. The hero's hands then defended his powerful hostage with violent blows. Thereafter that most gallant warrior caused
190 even more damage. Full of valour, he slew those thirty. He allowed one of them to live. He rode back fast enough to tell tidings of what
191 had happened there. They could see the truth of it by his red helmet.

The men of Denmark were most sorely grieved when they were told that their lord was taken prisoner. They told his brother of this. He began to go berserk, raging with anger because of the wrong that
192 had been done him.

The warrior Liudegast was led away, overcome by Sivrit's strength, to Gunther's men. Sivrit handed him over to Hagen. When they were told that it was the king of the Danes they were not
193 unduly sorry. They told the Burgundians to bind their banners. 'On, now!' said Sivrit. 'More is to be done here before the day ends, if I live so long. Comely women in the land of the Saxons, great numbers
194 of them, will grieve over this. You heroes from the Rhine, look to me. I can give you good escort into Liudeger's army, and then you will see helmets hewn by worthy heroes' hands. Before we turn back, they
195 will make sorrow's acquaintance.'

Gernot and his men hastened to their chargers. Lord Volker, that mighty minstrel, quickly hoisted the banner—he rode at the head
196 of the company. The retinue were also proudly prepared for battle. Yet they led with them no more than nine thousand men, as well as twelve warriors.* The dust then flew up from the roads! Over the land they rode. Their shield-rims were seen to shine splendidly in
197 great numbers there.

By then the Saxons had also arrived with their companies, with good sharp swords, as I have since heard tell. Those swords cut hard in the heroes' hands. They were intent on defending their castles and land against the foreigners. 198

The captain of his lords' companies, Hagen, then led his army forwards. Sivrit had also arrived with the men he had brought with him from the Netherlands. Great numbers of bloody hands were in the onslaught that day. Sindolt and Hunolt, and also Gernot, slew 199 heroes in great numbers in that attack, before the Saxons had fully grasped how valiant they were. That gave cause for noble women in great numbers to weep in time to come. 200

Volker and Hagen, and also Ortwin, dimmed the shine of helmets in great numbers in the battle, as the blood flowed—those battlesome* warriors! Many a marvel was wrought by Dancwart there. 201

The men of Denmark tried their luck well. Many a rim was then heard to resound in the charge, and sharp swords also rang out, striking many blows there. The Saxons, battle-bold,* did plenty of damage there. 202

When the men of Burgundy pressed into the battle, gaping wounds in great numbers were hewn by them. Then blood was seen to flow over saddles. Thus those bold and worthy knights sought honour. The swords in those heroes' hands, honed sharp, were heard 203 to ring out loudly there, as the men from the Netherlands pressed forwards in their lord's wake into the fierce ranks of the enemy. They advanced bravely alongside Sivrit. None of the Rhinelanders 204 was seen to follow him. A bloody brook could be perceived flowing through the bright helmets, the work of Sivrit's hands, until he then found Liudeger at the forefront of his companions-in-arms. By now 205 Sivrit had made his way backwards and forwards, right through the army three times. Now Hagen had arrived; he helped him carry out his full intent in the battle. That day many a worthy knight had to die before them. 206

When mighty Liudeger found Sivrit and saw him wielding the good sword Balmunc so high in his hands, slaying so many of his men, that lord grew angry and fierce enough. Then there was a huge 207 onrush and the sound of great swords clashing as the two retinues pressed towards one another. The two warriors vied with each other all the more then. The enemy companies started to retreat. Great hostility arose there. 208

The overlord of the Saxons had been told for certain that his brother had been taken captive—he was greatly distressed at that. He didn't know that it was the work of Siglint's son. They ascribed it to Gernot.
209 Liudeger found out the truth of the matter afterwards.

Liudeger's blows were so mighty that Sivrit's warhorse stumbled beneath his saddle. When the charger recovered, bold Sivrit took on
210 a fearsome mien in the attack. Hagen came greatly to his aid, as also did Gernot, Dancwart, and Volker—many of the enemy lay dead at their hands. Sindolt and Hunolt, and Sir Ortwin, proved capable of
211 felling many dead in that battle.

The noble princes, Sivrit and Liudeger, were not to be parted in battle. Many javelins were seen flying over helmets, piercing bright shields, thrown by the heroes' hands. Splendid shield-rims in great
212 numbers bore the mark of blood there. In that fierce onslaught many dismounted from their chargers. Valiant Sivrit and Liudeger ran at one another. Shafts were seen to fly there and many a sharp
213 javelin. Shield-bolts flew apart at Sivrit's hands. The hero of the Netherlands thought, then, that he would win victory over the bold Saxons, many of whom were seen to be wounded. Ah, what bright
214 chainmail bold Dancwart broke apart there!

Then Lord Liudeger recognized a crown painted on the shield in front of Sivrit's hand. He well knew that it was that mighty man. The
215 hero called out loudly to his allies then: 'Abandon the attack, all my men! I have seen Sigmunt's son here, I have recognized mighty Sivrit
216 here! The foul fiend himself has sent him here to Saxony!'

He ordered the banners to be lowered in the battle. He then asked for a truce, which was afterwards granted to him, but he had to go as a hostage into Gunther's land. Bold Sivrit's hands had wrung that
217 from him. By common counsel they abandoned the battle. They took off many hole-riddled helmets and laid down their broad shields. All the shields and helmets there bore the mark of blood that had flowed
218 at the hands of the Burgundians.

They took captive all whom they wanted, as it lay in their power. Gernot and Hagen, those valiant warriors, ordered the wounded to be laid on stretchers. They led five hundred fighting men as captives
219 away with them to the Rhine.

The vanquished warriors rode back to Denmark. Nor had the Saxons fought so valiantly there that they could be accorded praise—those heroes were sorry for it. Those doomed to die were then sorely

lamented over by their friends. They ordered that all the weapons 220
be loaded onto packhorses and taken back to the Rhine. Sivrit the
warrior, along with his heroes, had won the day there—he had
excelled, as all Gunther's men had to concede him. 221

Lord Gernot sent tidings to Worms. He told his friends at home
in his own land how he and his men had succeeded, and that those
valiant men had performed most honourable deeds. The pages 222
ran to tell the news. Those who had been sorrowful there before
rejoiced at the happy tidings that had come to them. Much ques-
tioning was heard on the part of noble ladies there as to the 223
success of the powerful king's men. One of the messengers was
told to go before Kriemhilt. That happened in all secrecy—indeed,
she didn't dare be open about it, for she had her dearest heart's
beloved among the men in the army. When she saw the messenger 224
coming to her chamber, fair Kriemhilt spoke most graciously:
'Now tell me happy tidings, for I'll give you my gold. If you tell no
lie, I'll hold you dear forever. How did my brother Gernot and other 225
friends of mine emerge from the battle? Are many of our men dead?
Or who did best there? This you must tell me.'

The messenger was quick to reply: 'We had no cowards amongst
us at all. When it came to battle in earnest, no one rode as well, 226
most noble queen, since I'm bound to tell you about it, as the most
noble guest from the Netherlands. Bold Sivrit's hands wrought
many marvels there. No matter what all the warriors did in battle, 227
Dancwart and Hagen, and other men of the king, honourably as
they fought, it was all as nothing compared with what Sivrit, King
Sigmunt's son, achieved single-handed. They caused many heroes 228
to be slain in the onslaught, yet no one could give you a full account
of the marvels Sivrit wrought there whenever he rode into battle.
He caused the ladies great grief over their kinsfolk. Many a lady's be- 229
loved inevitably lay dead there. His blows were heard to rain down so
loud upon helmets that they caused blood to flow from their wounds.
He is a bold and worthy knight, full of prowess. Despite all that 230
Ortwin of Metz achieved there—all those he could reach with his
sword were bound to be left lying there wounded, most of them
dying—it was your brother who there brought about the greatest peril 231
ever to happen in battles. The truth must be conceded to those excel-
lent warriors—the proud Burgundians have acted in such a way that
they can guard their honour well against all disgrace. Saddles in great 232

numbers were seen emptied there at their hands, where the plain resounded so loudly with the clash of bright swords. The warriors from the Rhine have ridden to such effect that their foes would have
233 been better off refraining from it. The bold men of Tronege caused great suffering when the army rode into battle in full force. Bold Hagen's hands caused the death of many there; much might be said
234 of that here in Burgundy. Sindolt and Hunolt, Gernot's men, and bold Rumolt did so much that Liudeger may forever regret declaring
235 hostilities on your kinsmen by the Rhine.

The greatest battle of all that happened there, first and last, that anyone beheld, was fought most willingly by Sivrit's hands. He is
236 bringing wealthy hostages into Gunther's land. That handsome man won them by the force of his valour, to the detriment of King Liudegast, and also his brother, Liudeger of Saxony. Listen to my tidings, now,
237 noble, proud queen: Sivrit's hands took them both captive. Never were so many hostages brought into this land as now come to the
238 Rhine by his doing.' No tidings could ever be dearer to her.

'They are bringing here into our land five hundred or more who are healthy, and—lady, let me tell you—some eighty red stretchers for the mortally wounded, most of whom were hewn down by
239 bold Sivrit's hands. Those who in their arrogance declared hostilities against the Rhineland must now be Gunther's captives. To our joy, they are being brought here into this land.'

Her bright complexion blushed when she heard those tidings told
240 in full. Her beautiful countenance turned rose-red at the news that the handsome warrior, young Sivrit, had emerged happily from the
241 great peril. She was pleased for her friends also, as was only right.

Then the lovely maiden said: 'You have told me good tidings. As a reward for this you shall have rich clothes and ten marks of gold, which I'll order to be carried to you.' For a reward like that such
242 tidings may readily be told to wealthy ladies.

They gave him his reward, the gold and also the garments. Then fair maidens in great numbers walked over to the windows. They looked out onto the road—many men in high spirits were then seen
243 riding into Burgundy. The healthy arrived, as did the wounded. They could hear their friends' greetings without any shame. The lord of the land rode towards his guests, full of joy—his great sorrows had
244 ended in happiness. He then gave a good welcome to his men, as he did to the foreigners, for it was only fitting that the powerful king

should thank warmly those who had returned to him, for having won victory honourably in the onslaught. 245

Gunther asked for tidings about his friends and who of his men had been slain in the campaign. He had lost only sixty men. They had to resign themselves to that, as has been done for heroes since. 246

Those who were in good health brought many lacerated shield-rims and many helmets, hewn to pieces, into Gunther's land. The army dismounted outside the king's great hall. To give them a friendly welcome, a merry clamour was heard. Then they ordered 247 that lodgings be found for the warriors in the town. The king asked that his guests be given the best of care. He ordered that the wounded be tended and given good quarters. His merits could readily be observed by the way he dealt with his foes. He said to Liudegast: 248 'Now, I bid you welcome here. I have suffered great harm at your hands, for which I will now be compensated, if fortune favours me. May God reward my allies—they have brought me joy!' 249

'You have good cause to thank them,' replied Liudeger. 'No king ever won such high-born hostages. We will give possessions in plenty in return for being guarded kindly, if you will act graciously towards your foes.' 250

'I will let you both walk free,' he said, 'provided my foes remain here with me. I want pledges that they will not leave my lands without permission.'

Liudeger offered his hand, swearing that on oath. They took them 251 to their rest and prepared chambers for them. Their wounded were seen to be given the best of beds. For the healthy, mead and good wine were poured. The retinue could never have been in better spirits then. Their hewn shields were then taken into safe-keeping. The 252 order was given that many bloody saddles—there were plenty of those there—were to be hidden so that the women would not weep. Many worthy knights returned battle-spent. The king entertained his guests 253 magnificently. The lands around were full of both strangers and acquaintances. He asked that the sorely wounded be cared for with all kindness. The enemies' pride had suffered a great fall there. Those 254 who were skilled in medicine were offered rich rewards, silver beyond weighing and bright gold also, to heal the heroes after the perils of battle. Moreover, the king offered liberal gifts to the guests. 255

Those who had it in mind to make the journey back home were asked to stay there for the time being, as friends are still asked to do

today. The king then took counsel as to how he should reward his
256 men. They had carried out his wishes most honourably.

Then Lord Gernot said: 'We should let them ride. In six weeks' time, let it be announced to them, they shall come back for a festivity—
257 by then many will be healed, who lie sorely wounded now.'

Then Sivrit of the Netherlands also asked for leave. When King Gunther found that was his intent he asked him amicably to remain with him as yet. If it were not for his sister, that would never have
258 happened. Moreover, he was too wealthy to accept any reward. He had well earned the king's favour, as also that of Gunther's kinsmen, who had seen what had happened in the battle because of his
259 mighty strength. On account of the beautiful maiden he intended to remain there for the time being, thinking that he might perhaps behold her. Afterwards it did come to pass—the maiden became acquainted with him, all as he had wished. In time to come he was to
260 ride merrily to Sigmunt's land.

The lord of the land commanded that chivalry be practised at all times. Young knights in great numbers did so willingly then. Meanwhile he ordered that seating be set up on the shore outside Worms for
261 those who were to come to him in Burgundy. At the time when they were due to arrive, fair Kriemhilt had heard the tidings that Gunther wanted to hold a festivity for the sake of his dear friends. Beautiful
262 ladies were very hard at work then at the garments and head-dresses they were to wear there. Wealthy Uote heard the tidings of the proud warriors who were due to arrive. Then many sumptuous clothes were
263 taken out of their folds. For her daughter's sake she ordered clothes to be made ready to adorn many ladies and maidens, and many of the young warriors of Burgundy. She also had many splendid garments
264 prepared for the strangers.

FIFTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT BEHELD KRIEMHILT FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME

DAILY now they could be seen riding to the Rhine, those who wanted to be present at the festivity. Many chargers and sumptuous garments were offered to those who came into the country for the sake of
265 the king. Seating was fully ready for them all, for the highest and the

best, as we are told, for thirty-two princes at the festivity there. The fair ladies vied in attiring themselves to meet the occasion. Young 266
Giselher was very busy there. He and Gernot, and also their vassals, duly welcomed both strangers and acquaintances most graciously. They greeted the knights as honour demanded. They took with them 267
into the land red-gold saddles in great numbers, splendid shields and sumptuous garments, which they brought to the Rhine for the festivity. Many who before had lacked health were seen be in joyful spirits. Those who lay in the beds and were suffering from their 268
wounds had now to dismiss death's harshness from their minds. They had to overcome their laments for the sick and unhealthy. They looked forward to the days of the festivity, to how they would meet 269
with hospitality there, to happiness beyond measure. All the people to be found there enjoyed delight in plenty. This caused great happiness to arise all over Gunther's land. 270

One Whitsun morning* people saw bold men in great numbers emerging from their dwellings, splendidly dressed, five thousand or more, to go to the festivity there. People vied with one another in pastimes in many places. 271

The host was well aware in his mind that the hero of the Netherlands loved his sister from his very heart, although he had never seen her—she whose great beauty was praised above all other maidens. 272
Then Sir Ortwin said to the king: 'If you wish to do full honour to the festivity, then you should let the lovely girls be seen—those who are present amid such great honour here in Burgundy. What would 273
delight a man and cause him to rejoice, unless it were beautiful maidens and noble women? Let your sister walk before your guests.' That counsel brought joy to many heroes. 274

'I will gladly agree to that,' replied the king. All who came to hear of this were delighted. Gunther sent a message to Lady Uote and her well-favoured daughter that they should go to court with their maidens. Then fine garments were sought and taken out of the 275
trunks. All the elegant clothes that were to be found in their folds, the torques and the braids, lay at their disposal. Comely maidens in great numbers took pains over their attire. 276

Young warriors in great numbers were intent that day on looking their best before the ladies, and would not have accepted a rich king's land in exchange for the privilege. They were delighted to see those they had never been acquainted with before.

277 Then the mighty king commanded a good hundred of his men to walk alongside his sister to be at her service, kinsmen of hers and his—they bore swords in their hands. That was the retinue of the 278 Burgundian court.

Uote, that most wealthy queen, was seen to approach with Kriemhilt. She had assembled some hundred or more beautiful ladies to bear her company—they wore sumptuous clothing. Her daughter was also fol- 279 lowed by comely maidens in great numbers. The people saw them all emerge from a chamber. Then there was a great deal of jostling on the part of heroes pressing in that direction, who hoped it might come to 280 pass that they should have the pleasure of seeing the noble maiden.

Then the charming damsel walked forward, like dawn emerging from dim clouds. He who bore her in his heart there, and had long done so, was then parted from much anguish, now that he saw 281 the lovely lady standing in great splendour there. Precious stones in great numbers gleamed from her garments. Her rose-pink complexion shone most charmingly. Even if anyone wished to do so, he could 282 not aver that he had ever seen anyone more beautiful in this world. Just as the bright moon stands before the stars, its beams radiantly descending from the clouds, so she now stood out against many a 283 noble lady. That raised the spirits of the gallant heroes there. The powerful chamberlains were seen to walk before her. The proud knights insisted on pressing forward to where they could see the charming maiden.

284 Lord Sivrit was both joyful and sorrowful. He thought to himself: 'How could it have come about that I should love you? It is a foolish hope. Yet if I am to be estranged from you,* I would rather be dead!' 285 These thoughts caused him to turn pale and blush time and again. Sigmunt's son stood so charmingly there, as if he had been painted on parchment by a masterly artist's skills.* They said of him that no 286 such handsome hero had ever been beheld.

Those who walked alongside the ladies ordered that all the ways be cleared to make space for them—many knights saw to that. The ladies' high-spirited hearts brought joy to many. Many noble women 287 could be seen in great good-breeding there.

Then Lord Gernot of Burgundy said: 'He who offered you his service so graciously—Gunther, dearest brother—you must act the same way by him before all these warriors. That is advice of which 288 I shall never be ashamed. Tell Sivrit to approach my sister so that

the maiden may give him her greeting—we'll never be the poorer for that! She who has never greeted any warrior before must take pains to give him her greeting, and by that we shall have won over this most gallant knight.' 289

Then the host's kinsmen went to find the hero. They said to the warrior from the Netherlands: 'The king has given you leave to go to court. His sister is to give you her greeting—this is to do you honour.' 290

Lord Sivrit was most happy at heart. He bore joy without sorrow in his mind at the thought of seeing fair Uote's daughter. She then greeted Sivrit with charming courtesy. When she saw the 291 high-spirited knight standing before her, his complexion took fire. The fair maiden said: 'Welcome, Sir Sivrit, noble and worthy knight!' At that greeting his spirits were greatly raised. He bowed attentively 292 to her. She took him by the hand. How very charmingly he walked alongside the lady! Both the lord and the lady looked at one another with fond glances—that was done in all secrecy. If white hands were 293 lovingly pressed there at all out of heartfelt love, I know nothing of it, yet I cannot believe that it was left undone. She had soon made known to him that she held him in high favour. 294

In that summer season and as the May days approached, he could never have borne in his heart so much high happiness as he gained there, when she whom he wished to have for his beloved walked hand-in-hand with him. Many warriors then thought: 'Ah, if the same fate 295 were to befall me, to walk side by side with her, as I have seen him do—or to lie with her! I'd not object to that!'

No warrior had ever served more to merit a queen. No matter what 296 kingdom the guests had arrived from, they all had eyes only for those two. She was given leave to kiss the handsome knight. Never in all the world had he enjoyed such happiness. The King of Denmark said 297 at once: 'Many lie sick at Sivrit's hands for the sake of this most noble greeting, as I well know to my cost. May God never let him come into my kingdom again!' 298

Then they gave the command that they should make way on all sides for fair Kriemhilt. Many bold knights were seen to go to church with her, in all decorum. (In time to come that most handsome man was to be parted from her.) She went then into the minster; many 299 women followed her. The queen was so well attired that high hopes in great numbers were wasted there. She was a feast there for many warriors' eyes. 300

Sivrit could scarcely wait for the singing of mass to cease. He could have thanked his good fortune forever, that she whom he bore in his heart was so fond of him. He, for his part, had good reason to hold the
301 fair maiden dear. When she came out of the minster, he having done so before her, they asked the bold knight to approach her again. Only then did the lovely maiden begin to thank him for having fought so
302 splendidly in the forefront of her kinsmen.*

'Now, God reward you, Sir Sivrit,' said that very lovely girl, 'for earning such true loyalty and favour from the warriors as I hear them tell of you.'

303 Then he began to cast loving looks at Lady Kriemhilt.

'I shall always serve them,' said the knight, 'and will never lay my head low unless I have done their will, as long as I live. This will be
304 done to earn your favour, my Lady Kriemhilt.'

For all of twelve days, every day alike, the admirable maiden was seen by the knight's side, whenever she was to go to court before her friends. Such attention was bestowed on the warrior out of great
305 affection. Joy and delight, a mighty clamour, were to be heard and seen every day before Gunther's hall, both outside and inside, on the
306 part of many bold men. Ortwin and Hagen wrought great marvels. No matter what anyone wished to undertake, they were ready for it in full measure, those most gallant heroes, so that those warriors became
307 well known to the guests. All Gunther's land was embellished by this.

Those who lay wounded there were seen to emerge from their dwellings. They were eager to join in the household's pastimes, ducking behind shields* and shooting many shafts. Plenty assisted
308 them in this, for the company was great in number. During that festivity the host gave order that they be provided with the best food possible. He had renounced any kind of disgrace that a king might ever have. They saw him walk over to his guests with a friendly
309 bearing.

He said: 'You worthy warriors, before you depart from here, accept my gifts. I am determined to serve you always. If you do not
310 disdain my possessions, I will share them with you most willingly.'

The men of Denmark said at once: 'Before we ride back home to our land, we desire a lasting truce—we warriors have need of that. We have
311 lost many a dear friend, dead at the hands of your knights.' Liudegast was healed of his wounds. The overlord of the Saxons had fully recovered from the battle. They left several dead behind them in that land.

Then King Gunther walked over to Sivrit. He said to the warrior: 312
'Now give me counsel as to what I should do. Our adversaries want to ride off tomorrow morning, and request a lasting truce of me and my men. Now counsel me, Sir Sivrit, as to what seems best to you. 313
I will tell you what these lords offer me: they would willingly give me all the gold that five hundred packhorses could carry, if I were to let them go free.'

Mighty Sivrit replied: 'That would be an ill deed. You must let 314
them leave here freely, provided that these noble warriors forever refrain from riding in enmity into your land again. Let oaths be sworn to you on this by both these lords' hands here.' 315

'I will follow that counsel.' At that they parted. His foes were told that no one desired the gold they had offered. Back at home their dear friends were longing for the return of the battle-spent men. 316

Many shields full of treasure were brought forward. Gunther shared it out amply, not weighing the cost, among his friends—some five hundred marks, and more besides. Gernot, that valiant warrior, had advised Gunther to do so. 317

They all took their leave when they wanted to depart. The guests were then seen to walk over to Kriemhilt, and also to where Lady Uote the queen sat. Never again were knights given a better farewell. 318
The lodgings were emptied when they rode away. The king still remained at home there, celebrating nobly together with his kinsmen and noble vassals in great numbers. They were seen to go daily to Lady Kriemhilt. 319

The worthy hero Sivrit then wanted to take his leave. He had no hope that he would gain what he had in mind there. The king heard it said that he wanted to depart. Young Giselher dissuaded him from the journey: 'Where do you want to ride now, most noble Sivrit? Stay 320
with the warriors here, do as I ask you, stay with King Gunther and also his vassals. There are many beautiful ladies here, whom we shall gladly have you see.' 321

Mighty Sivrit then replied: 'Let the chargers stand. I had intended to ride away from here, but I have changed my mind. Take the shields away also. I did indeed want to go back to my own land. Sir Giselher in his great loyalty has dissuaded me.' 322

Thus the bold warrior remained there out of affection for his friends. Indeed, he could not have felt so much at ease anywhere

323 else in the lands.* That was because he now saw fair Kriemhilt daily. The lord stayed there because of her exceeding beauty. They now passed the time with many entertainments. Yet love of her oppressed him—it often caused him anguish. (That caused the bold warrior to
324 die a most wretched death in time to come.)

SIXTH ADVENTURE

HOW GUNTHER WENT TO ICELAND TO WOO PRÜNHILT

UNHEARD-OF tidings came across the Rhine. There was talk of a land where there were many beautiful maidens. Gunther, that worthy king, took it into his head to win one—the warrior's spirits rose high
325 at the thought. There was a queen who resided across the sea, whose like no one knew of anywhere. She was exceedingly beautiful and great in physical strength. She shot the shaft with bold knights—love
326 was the prize. She threw the stone far, and then leapt a great distance after it. Whoever desired her love had to win three games without fail against that well-born lady. If he failed in any one of them, he would
327 lose his head. The damsel had won at such games countless times. A certain well-favoured knight by the Rhine heard about this, and he bent his mind on that beautiful woman. (That caused heroes to lose
328 their lives thereafter.)*

Then the overlord of the Rhine said: 'I will go downriver and over the sea to Prünhilt, no matter what befalls me. For her love I will risk
329 my life—I will lose it unless she becomes my wife!'

'I advise against that,' said Sivrit then. 'Indeed, the queen has such dread customs that anyone who seeks her love will pay a high price.
330 You ought therefore to dismiss this journey from your mind.'

'In that case I advise you', said Hagen then, 'to ask Sivrit to endure the arduous peril alongside you—that is my counsel now, since he is
331 so well acquainted with how things stand with Prünhilt.'*

Gunther said: 'Will you help me, noble Sivrit, to woo this lovely queen? If you do what I ask of you and this lovely woman becomes
332 my beloved, I'll risk my honour and life for you.'

Sivrit, Sigmunt's son, answered: 'If you'll give me your sister, fair Kriemhilt, that proud princess, then I'll do it. In that case I desire no
333 further reward for my labours.'

'I swear it,' said Gunther then. 'Here is my hand on it, Sivrit. If fair Prünhilt comes here to this land, then I'll give you my sister for a wife, and you may live happily with the fair lady forever.' 334

They then swore oaths on this, those most noble warriors. All the worse was the peril they were to undergo before they brought the lady to the Rhine. Those valiant heroes were subsequently to be sorely troubled. Sivrit had to take with him the cloak which 335 the valiant hero had won with hardship from the dwarf called Albrich. The bold and powerful warriors made themselves ready for the journey. When mighty Sivrit wore the cape of invisibility he 336 had, once inside it, strength in abundance—a good dozen men's might in addition to his own. He set about the wooing of that most noble woman with great cunning. Moreover, the cloak of invis- 337 ibility was of such a nature that anyone wearing it could do whatever he wanted without anyone seeing him. Thus he won Prünhilt. (It caused sorrow to befall him.) 338

Gunther said: 'Now tell me, Sir Sivrit, before my journey begins—if we are to go to sea in full honour, shall we take any warriors into Prünhilt's land? Thirty thousand knights will soon be sent for.' 339

'No matter how great an army we were to take with us,' Sivrit replied, 'the queen holds to such dread customs that they would, nonetheless, have to die, so haughty is she. I must give you better counsel, bold and worthy knight. We must go down the Rhine 340 in warrior fashion.* I shall name to you who the party is to be. We shall be no more than four knights, all told, making our way seawards. Thus we shall win the lady, no matter what befalls us afterwards. I shall be one of the companions, you'll be the 341 second. Let the third be Hagen—then we may well hold on to our lives! As for the fourth, let it be Dancwart, that valiant man. No thousand men could ever take us on in battle.' 342

'Before we set off,' said the king then, 'I'd be glad to know what clothes we should wear before Prünhilt, which would befit us well there. You must tell Gunther this.'* 343

'At all times in Prünhilt's land they wear the best garments ever found. Therefore we must wear sumptuous clothes before the lady, lest we be at all disgraced when people hear tidings told of this.' 344

Then the worthy knight said: 'In that case I will go myself to my dear mother, to see if I can persuade her to have her fair maids help

prepare such garments for us as we may wear with honour before the
345 noble maiden.'

Then Hagen of Tronege said proudly: 'Why do you want to ask such services of your mother? Let your sister hear what we intend—
346 then her services will benefit you on this journey to a foreign court.'

Then Gunther sent a message to his sister, telling her he wished to see her, as also did Sir Sivrit. Before that came about, the fair maiden had dressed herself to perfection. It was small sorrow to her
347 that those valiant men were coming to see her. Her retinue were also now attired as well became them.

The two princes had arrived. When she heard that, she stood up from her chair and walked courteously over to welcome the most
348 noble stranger, and also her brother. 'Welcome to my brother and his companion. I would gladly know', said the maiden, 'what you lords want, since you have come to court. Let me hear what you noble
349 warriors have in mind.'

King Gunther replied: 'Lady, I'll tell you. We must endure many troubles, yet stay in high spirits. We want to ride on a wooing expedition, far off into foreign lands; we must have elegant garments
350 for the journey.'

'Sit down now, dear brother,' said the princess, 'and let me hear who exactly the ladies are whom you desire to court in other kings'
351 lands.' The lady took both the excellent knights by the hand. Then she walked over with the pair of them to where she had been seated before, on sumptuous couches, as I well know, embroidered with fine pictures, well adorned with raised gold. They passed their
352 time pleasantly among the ladies. Many amorous glances and well-meaning looks passed between the pair. He bore her in his heart; she was as dear to him as life itself. Fair Kriemhilt was afterwards to
353 become mighty Sivrit's wife.

Then the powerful king said: 'My dearest sister, we can't do without your help. We want to pass the time pleasantly in Prünhilt's land. We
354 need to have splendid garments to wear before the ladies there.'

The damsel replied: 'My dearest brother, I'll show you most willingly that I'm at your disposal and will give you all the help I can.
355 If anyone were to refuse you, that would grieve Kriemhilt. You must not ask me anxiously, noble knight, but must proudly give me your commands. I am ready and willing to do whatever I can to please
356 you,' said the charming maiden.

'We want, dear sister, to wear fine garments. Your noble hands must help prepare them. Let your maidens see to it that our clothing suits us well, for we are resolved to go on this journey.' 357

Then the damsel said: 'Now mark my words. I myself have silk.* See to it now that they carry precious stones in to us, loaded on shields, and then we will fashion the garments.' Both Gunther and Sivrit were ready and willing to do that. 358

'Who are the companions,' said the queen, 'who are to go thus clad to court with you?'

Gunther said: 'There will be four of us, all told. Two of my vassals, Dancwart and Hagen, are to go to court with me. Pay close 359 heed, lady, to what I tell you: my three companions and I must have three changes of clothes for four days, and such fine garments that we may leave Prünhilt's land without disgrace.' 360

With a cordial leave-taking the lords departed. Then Queen Kriemhilt ordered thirty maidens from amongst her damsels to come out of their chambers—they were well skilled in such work. 361 Into the Arabian silk, white as snow, and the noble silk from Zazamanc,* green as clover, they worked gems—fine garments were the outcome. They were cut by Kriemhilt herself, that most noble maiden. Fair linings made from outlandish fish-skins,* strange to 362 behold, all that they could acquire, they covered with silk for the warriors to wear. Hear great marvels now told of that bright garb! 363 They had silk in plenty from the land of Morocco, and also from Lybia, the very best that any king's kin ever acquired. Kriemhilt made it apparent that she held them in high favour. Since they were 364 now desirous of this noble expedition, they disdained ermine skins.* Furs lay on top, black as coal, such as even today would well suit brave heroes at festivities. Many precious stones shone forth from 365 Arabian gold. The labour of the ladies was not small. Within seven weeks they had prepared the garments. By then the worthy warriors' armour was also prepared. 366

When they were ready, a stout little skiff had been painstakingly constructed for them to sail on the Rhine. It was to take them down-river, all the way to the sea.

The noble damsels ached from their labours. Then the warriors 367 were told that the elegant garments that they were to take with them were now ready for them, as they had requested. The work had now been done.

368 They then wanted to stay by the Rhine no longer. A messenger was sent to the companions-in-arms to ask if they wanted to look at their new garments, to see whether they were too short or too long for
369 the heroes. They fitted them well, for which they thanked the ladies. All whom they passed by had to concede to them that they had seen nothing better in the whole world. They took delight, therefore, in wearing the clothes at court there. No one could ever find a word to
370 say of better warriors' garments. They did not hold back words of great gratitude. Then the gallant heroes desired to take their leave. The lords did so with knightly courtesy. Bright eyes were dimmed
371 and wet at that.

Kriemhilt said: 'Dearest brother, you would be better off staying here and wooing other ladies, so that your life should not be so very much at risk—that I would call wise. You can find as high-born a
372 wife closer to home.'

I think her heart was telling them what was to happen to them in consequence. The ladies all wept as one, no matter what anyone said. Their gold breastplates were dimmed by the tears that rained down
373 from their eyes.

Kriemhilt said: 'Sir Sivrit, let my dear brother be commended to your loyalty and your favour, so that nothing ill befalls him in Prünhilt's land.'

The valiant warrior vowed to protect him, taking Lady Kriemhilt's
374 hand.* The mighty knight replied: 'As long as I live you may be free, lady, of all anxiety. I'll bring him back to you safe and sound, to the
375 Rhine here—rest assured of that.' The fair maiden bowed to him.

Their golden shields were carried down to the shore and all their garments were brought to them. They ordered their horses to be led
376 over—they wanted to ride off. Fair ladies wept profusely there. The charming maidens stood then at the windows. A high wind swept their ship and its sail along. The proud companions-in-arms were afloat on the Rhine. King Gunther then said: 'Who is to be the ship's
377 captain now?'

'I will,' said Sivrit. 'I am well capable of guiding you there over the waves. I tell you, worthy heroes, that I am well acquainted with the
378 right sea-roads.' In high spirits they departed from Burgundy.

Sivrit then quickly took a pole; powerfully he pushed off from the bank. Bold Gunther took an oar himself. Thus the brave, renowned
379 knights drew away from the land. They took with them excellent

food and also much good wine, the best to be found in the lands around the Rhine. Their warhorses were in good condition—they were well tended. Their skiff sailed very smoothly—little harm befell them. Their stout halyards were stretched to the full. They sailed 380
for twenty miles before night fell, a favourable wind blowing them downstream to the sea. (Afterwards their arduous toil would cost those proud warriors dear.) 381

On the twelfth morning, so we hear tell, the winds had borne them far off towards Isenstein, in Prünhilt's land. That was unknown territory to all of them except Sivrit. When King Gunther saw so many 382
castles, and also the broad marches, how quick he was to speak then! 'Tell me, friend Sivrit, do you know whose are these castles, and also this splendid land?' 383

Sivrit replied: 'It is well known to me. These are Prünhilt's people and land, and the fortress of Isenstein, of which you heard me tell. There, before the day is out, you may see many fair ladies. 384
Moreover, I advise you heroes to be of one mind and all say the same thing—that seems good counsel to me—when we walk into Prünhilt's presence, before the day is out. We may have good reason to be troubled when we stand before the queen. When we see the 385
lovely lady amid her retinue, then, famed* heroes, you must all say the same: Gunther is my lord and I am his vassal. All that he hopes for there will be done.' 386

They were ready to do all that he ordered them to vow. In their pride, none of them desisted, but they all asserted whatever he wanted—that turned out well for them when King Gunther saw fair Prünhilt. 387

[Sivrit said:]* 'I don't swear this oath so much for your sake as for love of your sister, that fair maiden. She is as dear to me as my life and soul. I will gladly serve to earn her for my wife.' 388

SEVENTH ADVENTURE

HOW GUNTHER WON PRÜNHILT

By that time their skiff had come so close to the castle that the king could see fair maidens in great numbers standing high up at the windows. Gunther was sorry to know nothing of their identity. 389

He asked Sivrit, his companion: 'Do you know anything about these maidens who are looking down towards us, here on the waves? No
390 matter what their lord is called, their spirits are most high.'

Then Lord Sivrit said: 'Now you must search secretly among the damsels and tell me then which you would take if it were in your power.'

391 'I will do so,' replied Gunther, that bold and valiant knight. 'Well, I see one of them standing in that window in snow-white clothing, who is so well-favoured—my eyes choose her because of
392 her fair person. If it were in my power, she would become my wife.'

'Your eyes have chosen rightly. That is noble Prünhilt, the fair maiden for whom your heart, your mind, and your intent strive.'

393 The whole of her demeanour seemed noble to Gunther.

Then the queen ordered her noble maidens to go away from the windows. They were not to stand there to be looked at by the foreigners. They did her bidding. What the ladies did next has also
394 been told us. To meet the strangers they adorned themselves, as has ever been comely women's custom. They walked over to the narrow windows, from which they could see the heroes—they did so in order
395 to observe them.

There were only four of them who had come to that land. Bold Sivrit led a warhorse onto the beach, watched through the windows by the comely women. King Gunther thought himself honoured by
396 that.* Sivrit held his elegant charger by the reins there—it was noble and handsome, huge and strong—until King Gunther had seated himself in the saddle. Such was the service Sivrit rendered Gunther,
397 though he was afterwards to forget it altogether. Then he also led his own horse down from the skiff. Seldom had he done such service before as to stand at a hero's stirrups. The fair and proud ladies saw
398 that through the windows. Those two most gallant heroes were very much alike, in that their chargers and their clothing were both of the same snow-white hue. Their fair shields shone from the hands of
399 those most gallant men. Their saddles were well adorned with gems, their bridles slender. They rode in splendour up to Prünhilt's hall. From their harness hung bells of bright red gold. They arrived in that
400 land, as their courage commanded, with new-cut lances, with splendid swords which reached down to those gallant men's spurs. Those valiant warriors carried swords that were sharp and broad. Prünhilt,
401 that most noble maiden, saw all that for herself.

Together with them came then Dancwart, and also Hagen. We hear tell that those knights wore sumptuous clothing of raven-black hue. Their shields were splendid, of great size, good and broad. 402
They saw them wearing gems from the land of India; they could see them rippling on their clothes in all splendour. They left their little skiff unguarded by the tide. Thus those bold and worthy heroes rode up to the castle. They saw eighty-six towers standing 403
within there, three spacious palaces and a handsome great hall of noble marble, green as grass, where Prünhilt herself resided with her retinue. 404

The castle gates were opened wide. Then Prünhilt's men ran to meet the strangers and welcome them into their lady's land. They gave order that their horses be stabled and their shields taken from their hands. A chamberlain said: 'You must give us your swords, and 405
also your bright breastplates.'

'You won't be granted those,' said Hagen of Tronege. 'We'll carry them ourselves.'

Then Sivrit told him the truth of the matter: 'In this castle the 406
custom is, I tell you, that no strangers are to bear weapons here. Now let them be taken away—it would be as well.' Hagen, Gunther's vassal, agreed to this most unwillingly. 407

They ordered wine to be poured out for the guests and gave them comfortable chambers. Great numbers of bold warriors* were to be seen at court there, walking in princely garb everywhere. Many looks were cast then at the bold strangers. 408

Tidings were then brought to Lady Prünhilt that unknown warriors had arrived there, wearing splendid clothing, sailing on the tide. This caused the beautiful, noble maiden to ask for tidings. 409
'You must let me hear,' said the queen, 'who these warriors, all unknown to us, may be, who stand so proudly in my castle, and ask for whose sake the heroes have travelled here.' 410

Then one of her retinue said: 'Lady, I venture to say, though I have never seen any of them before, that one standing amongst them looks like Sivrit. You ought to give him a good welcome—that is my loyal counsel. Another of the companions is so admirable. If he 411
had such power, he might well be a mighty king, reigning over the broad lands of princes—if he has such. You can see him standing so very proudly among the others. The third of the companions is 412
so fearsome—and yet of handsome build, mighty queen—casting so

413 many fierce glances about him. He has, I believe, a grim cast of mind. The youngest amongst them is so admirable—I see the powerful knight standing there so charmingly, modest as a maid, and with a goodly bearing. We might all have good reason to be afraid if anyone
414 here were to harm him. No matter how blithe he is in his courtesy and how handsome his person, he might readily cause comely women to weep if he were to wax wrath. To judge from his build, all his
415 qualities are those of a bold and valiant knight.'

Then the queen said: 'Now bring me my clothes. If mighty Sivrit has come into this land in pursuit of my love, it will cost him his life. I am not so very much in fear of him that I shall become his
416 wife.'

Soon fair Prünhilt was well attired. Beautiful maidens walked alongside her then in great numbers, a good hundred or more. They were in fine array. Those comely women wanted to see the
417 strangers. Together with them walked knights from that country of Iceland, Prünhilt's warriors, bearing swords in their hands, five hundred or more. That gave the strangers cause for anxiety.
418 The bold and gallant heroes then rose from their seats. When the queen saw Sivrit—you may now wish to hear what the maiden said: 'Welcome, Sivrit, here to this land. What is the purpose of your
419 journey? I would gladly know it.'

'Most gracious thanks to you, my lady Prünhilt, for deigning to greet me, munificent prince's daughter, ahead of this noble warrior who stands before me here, for he is my lord*—I would gladly
420 dispense with such honour. He is a Rhinelander by birth. What more shall I tell you? It is for your sake that we have travelled here. He would gladly woo you, no matter what happens to him in consequence. Now think about this before it is too late—my lord
421 will not spare you. He is called Gunther and is a proud king. If he were to win your love, he'd desire nothing more. Indeed, this well-favoured warrior commanded me to come here. If I could have
422 refused him, I'd gladly have refrained.'

She replied: 'If he's your lord and you're his vassal, and he dares take on the games I'll set him—if he proves master in them, then I'll
423 be his wife—but if I win, it will cost all of you your lives.'

Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'Lady, let us see these tasking games of yours. They'd have to be hard indeed before Gunther my lord were
424 to yield to you. He is fully confident of winning such a fair maiden.'

'He will have to throw the stone and leap after it, and shoot the javelin in competition with me. Do not be in too much of a hurry! You may well lose your honour and your lives here! Think long and hard on this,' said the lovely lady. 425

Valiant Sivrit stepped up to the king, asking him to tell all his intent to the queen—he was not to be afraid. 'I will guard you well against her by my wiles.' 426

Then King Gunther said: 'Proud queen, set now whatever tasks you command. Even if it were yet more, I would undertake it all for the sake of your fair person. I will lose my head unless you become my wife.' 427

When the queen heard his words she asked that the games be prepared in haste as then best suited her. She ordered good battle-gear to be prepared for her, a breastplate of red gold and a good shield's rim. The maiden put on a silken shift beneath her armour,* 428 one never slashed by a sword in any battle, made of phellel-silk* from Lybia—it was most fair. Brightly embroidered braids could be seen to shine from it. 429

Meanwhile the warriors met with many taunts and threats. Dancwart and Hagen were not best pleased. They were worried as to how the king might fare. They thought: 'This journey of ours does not bode too well for us warriors.' 430

Meanwhile handsome Sivrit, for his part, had boarded the skiff before anyone could find out. He found his cloak of invisibility lying hidden there. He slipped into it quickly, and then no one could tell who he was. He hurried back. He then found many warriors, there 431 where the queen was setting out the games to be played for such high stakes. In secret he walked over there—that was done out of cunning so that none of all those present there could see him. The rink* where 432 the games were to take place was marked out before many bold warriors, who were to watch them, more than seven hundred of them. They were seen to bear swords. Those heroes were to announce who succeeded in the games. 433

Prünhilt had arrived by then. They saw that she was armed as if she were to fight for all the kingdoms in the world. Above her silks she wore ingots of gold in great numbers. Her lovely hue shone splendidly beneath that covering. Then her retinue arrived, carrying in 434 their hands a rim all of red gold with steel-hard buckles, massive and broad, beneath which the lovely maiden wanted to play the games. 435

The lady's shield-strap was a noble braid. Gems green as grass lay embroidered upon it, reflected here and there in the gold. A man
436 would have to be most valiant if *that* lady were to hold him dear. The shield that the maiden was to carry was, beneath its buckles, so we are told, some three spans in breadth, of steel and also of gold—it was of ample splendour. Her chamberlain and three others could
437 scarcely carry it. When mighty Hagen saw that shield being carried forward, the hero of Tronege said grimly: 'What now, King Gunther? Are we to lose our lives like this? She whom you desire to woo there
438 is the very Devil's wife!'

Hear more now about her garments—she possessed plenty. She wore a noble, sumptuous tabard, made of silk from Azagouc;* from
439 its hue precious stones in great numbers shone from the queen.

Then they carried in for the lady a heavy, huge javelin, very sharp, which she always threw. It was strong and bulky, massive and broad,
440 and its edges cut most fearsomely. Hear marvels told of that javelin's weight: three-and-a-half ingots* had been beaten to make it. Three of Prünhilt's men could scarcely carry it. Noble Gunther began to
441 grow very anxious. He thought to himself: 'What is to come of this? How might even the foul fiend prevail here? If I were back alive in
442 Burgundy, this queen here would long be free of my love!'

Then Hagen's brother, bold Dancwart, said: 'I regret from my heart this wooing expedition. We were always renowned as warriors. What a way to lose our lives if women are now to be our ruin in
443 these lands! I am heavy at heart that I ever came into this land. If my brother Hagen had his sword in his hand, and I mine also, then all
444 Prünhilt's men would have to rein in their pride. Rest assured, they'd have to keep back, even if I'd sworn a thousand oaths to keep the peace. Rather than see my dear lord die, this maiden in all her beauty
445 would have to lose her life!'

'We could easily leave this land unimprisoned,' said then his brother Hagen, 'if we had the armour we are sorely in need of and our fine
446 swords—then this mighty lady's pride would easily be tamed!'

The noble maiden heard loud and clear what the knight said. Smiling, she looked over her shoulder: 'Since he thinks himself so valiant, let their armour be brought in to them. Put the sharp swords
447 in the warriors' hands!'

When they had regained their swords as the maiden had ordered, valiant Dancwart blushed for joy. 'Now let them play whatever

games they will,' said that man of great mettle. 'Gunther will be unvanquished now that we have our swords.' 448

Prünhilt's strength was all too apparent. They carried a heavy stone into the rink for her, great and bulky, massive and round. Twelve of those bold and valiant heroes could scarcely carry it. She 449 always threw it after she had hurled the javelin. The Burgundians grew greatly anxious. 'Good grief!' said Hagen. 'What a beloved the king has found! She should be the foul fiend's bride in Hell!' 450

She rolled her sleeves up her white arms. She grasped the shield in her hand. She lifted the javelin high—then battle was begun. Gunther and Sivrit feared Prünhilt's hostility. If Sivrit had not come 451 to Gunther's aid she would have taken the king's life. Sivrit walked up secretly and touched Gunther's hand. Gunther was greatly troubled by his wiles. 'What has touched me?' thought the bold king. 452 He looked all about him—he could find no one standing there.

Sivrit said: 'It is I, Sivrit, your dear friend. You need have no fear whatever of the queen. Put the shield into my hands and let me carry 453 it, and mark well what you hear me say. You go through the motions now, and I will do the deeds.' When Gunther realized who it was he was relieved. 454

Sivrit said: 'Now keep my wiles secret. You must tell no one of them, and then the queen will win very little fame by you, no matter how much she desires it. See how the lady stands without anxiety before you now!' 455

Then the proud maiden hurled her javelin with great force at a new shield, massive and broad, which Siglint's son carried in his hand. The fire leapt up from the steel, as if blown by the wind. The 456 stout javelin's blade pierced right through the shield, so that fire was seen to spark from the chainmail. At the power of the throw both those strong men staggered. Were it not for the cloak of invisibility they would have died on the spot. 457

Blood broke from valiant Sivrit's mouth. Immediately he leapt up again. Then the noble hero took hold of the javelin which she had thrown through his rim. Strong Sivrit's hand sent it back at her. 458 He thought: 'I do not want to pierce the fair maiden.' He inverted the javelin's blade behind his back. He threw the shaft of the javelin at her armour, so that it resounded loudly because of the strength of his courageous hand. The fire flashed from her chainmail as if driven 459 by the wind. Sigmunt's son threw that shot with mettle. She did not

have the strength to stand up to that throw. Indeed, King Gunther
460 would never have been capable of that!

How quickly fair Prünhilt leapt up again! 'Gunther, noble knight, I thank you for that throw!' She believed he had done it with his
461 own strength—a much mightier man had crept up to deceive her. Then she walked rapidly away—she was in angry mood. The noble, worthy maiden raised the stone up high. She hurled it mightily from her hand, a great distance away. Then she leapt after the throw, all
462 her armour resounding! The stone had fallen to the ground a good twenty fathoms away. The well-favoured maiden outdid the throw by her leap. Lord Sivrit walked over to where the stone lay. Gunther
463 moved it then, but it was that hero who did the throwing. Sivrit was bold, very strong and tall. He threw the stone further, and moreover leapt a greater distance. The fine wiles he practised meant that he had
464 enough strength to carry King Gunther with him in his leap.

The leap had been made, the stone had fallen to the ground. They saw no one else then but Sir Gunther. Fair Prünhilt grew red with
465 rage. Sivrit had forestalled King Gunther's death. She raised her voice somewhat as she spoke to her retinue, when they saw the hero hale and healthy at the edge of the rink: 'Come over here in haste, my kinsmen
466 and my vassals! You must all be subject to King Gunther!'

Then those valiant men laid their swords on the ground. They knelt at the feet of powerful Gunther from the land of Burgundy—bold men in great numbers. They believed that he had won the games by
467 his own strength. He greeted her charmingly, being rich in courtesy. Then the admirable maiden took him by the hand. She permitted him to take power there. Hagen, that bold and valiant knight, was
468 well pleased at that. She asked the noble knight, Gunther, to walk away with her into the spacious great hall. After that the warriors were served with greater hospitality. Dancwart and Hagen took no
469 umbrage at that.

Bold Sivrit was wise enough to take his cloak of invisibility back to safe-keeping. Then he returned to the hall, where many a lady sat.
470 He said to the king—and that was a cunning deed on his part: 'What are you waiting for, my lord? When are you to begin those games, so many of which the queen is setting you? And let us soon see what is
471 their nature.' The cunning man acted as if he knew nothing about it.

Then the queen said: 'How has it happened that you, Sir Sivrit, have seen nothing of the games which Gunther's hand has won here?'

Hagen from the land of Burgundy answered her. He said: 'Lady, 472
you had given us cause for anxiety. Sivrit, the worthy hero, was down by the skiff when the overlord of the Rhine won the games against you. That is why he knows nothing of this,' said Gunther's vassal. 473

'Then happy am I at these tidings,' said Sir Sivrit, 'that your pride is laid so low here, that someone has lived to be master over you. Now, noble maiden, you must follow us to the Rhine.' 474

Then the well-favoured queen said: 'That cannot be. First my kinsmen and vassals must learn of this. I cannot leave my lands so readily. My best allies must be sent for first.' 475

Then she ordered her messengers to ride off in all directions. She sent for her allies, kinsmen, and vassals. She asked them to come to Isenstein without fail, and ordered that they all be given sumptuous and splendid garments. Daily they rode in their bands, 476
early and late, towards Prünhilt's castle. 'Ye gods!' said Hagen. 'What have we done! To wait for fair Prünhilt's men here would cost us very dear! When they arrive with their armies in this land—the queen's 477
intent is not known to us!—what if she becomes so angry that we are doomed? In that event this noble maiden was born to give us great trouble.' 478

Then mighty Sivrit said: 'I shall forestall that. I'll stop you worrying on that score. I shall bring you help into this land, from excellent warriors, never yet known to you. You are not to ask about my 479
whereabouts—I want to leave here. May God preserve your honour meanwhile! I'll come back soon, bringing you a thousand of the very best knights I have ever known.' 480

'Then do not linger long,' replied the king. 'We have good reason to be glad of your help.'

Sivrit said: 'I'll be back in a few days. You must tell Prünhilt that you have sent me on a journey.' 481

EIGHTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT FETCHED HIS MEN

THEN Sivrit in his cloak of invisibility walked out of the gate that led to the shore, where he found the bark. Sigmunt's son boarded it in all secrecy. He quickly steered it away, as if it were blown by

482 the wind. No one could see the skipper. The bark sailed fast, pow-
ered by Sivrit's great strength. People thought that a severe gale* was
483 driving it, but no, it was Sivrit, fair Siglint's son, driving it forward.
Sailing for that day and the following night, his massive strength
took him a good hundred miles, and yet more, to a land named after
484 the Nibelungs, where he had taken possession of the great hoard.
The hero sailed alone into a wide wharf. Quickly the gallant knight
moored the skiff. He walked up to a mountain, on which there stood
485 a castle, and looked for lodging, as the way-worn do.

He came up to the gate. It was closed against him. They were guarding their honour, as people still do today. The stranger began
486 to beat at the door—it was well guarded. He found a monster of a man standing behind it, who had the castle in his care; his weapons always lay close to hand. The giant said: 'Who is that knocking so hard at the gate?'

487 Lord Sivrit, standing outside, disguised his voice. He said: 'I am a warrior! Now open the door! Or else I, standing outside here, will before the day is out provoke the anger of a fair few who would gladly lie easy and take their rest.'

488 The gatekeeper was angry at Sir Sivrit's words. Now the bold giant had donned his armour, put his helmet on his head. The mighty man quickly grabbed his shield. He flung open the gate. How
489 ferociously he ran at Sivrit!—how dared he wake up so many bold men!—his hands dealt blows fast and hard there. The proud stranger ducked to avoid them. The gatekeeper succeeded in shatter-
490 ing his shield-bolts with an iron pole.* The hero was in trouble! Sivrit was in some fear of death when the gatekeeper struck such powerful
491 blows. His lord, Sivrit, respected him amply for this. They fought so hard that the whole castle echoed with the clamour. It could be heard then in Nibelunc's hall. Sivrit overcame the gatekeeper and tied him up. Tidings of this spread all through the land of the
492 Nibelungs.

Then, far off in the mountain, valiant Albrich, a wild dwarf, heard the fierce fighting. Quickly he armed himself, then ran to where he
493 found that most noble stranger tying up the giant with firm bonds. Albrich was very fierce and had strength in plenty. He wore a helmet and chainmail, and carried a whip of gold in his hand.* He ran fast at
494 Sivrit. Seven heavy balls hung from his scourge; with that he struck so fiercely at bold Sivrit's shield, which he held in front of him, that much

of it was shattered. The handsome stranger feared for his life then. 495
He threw aside his shattered shield. He thrust his long sword into its scabbard, not wishing to slay his chamberlain. He clung to his good breeding, as courtesy commanded him. He charged at Albrich with his 496
mighty hands, seizing the hoary old man by his beard. He pulled monstrously hard at it, so that Albrich cried out loud. The young hero's chastisement* hurt Albrich hard. The bold dwarf cried out loudly: 'Let 497
me live! If I might be anyone's bondsman but that of one warrior, to whom I swore oaths that I'd be his subject, I'd serve you rather than die,' said the cunning dwarf. 498

Sivrit tied up Albrich, as he had done the giant before. Sivrit's strength hurt him hard. The dwarf asked: 'What is your name?'

He said: 'I am called Sivrit. I thought you knew me well!' 499

'Happy am I to hear these tidings!' said Albrich the dwarf. 'Now I have fully felt the impact of your warrior-like deeds and know that you are rightfully lord of this land. I'll do whatever you command, if you let me live.' 500

Then Lord Sivrit said: 'You must quickly go and bring to me the best warriors we have, a thousand Nibelungs—let them behold me here!' No one heard him explain why he wanted this. 501

He untied the giant's and Albrich's bonds. Then Albrich ran quickly to where he could find the warriors. Troubled, he wakened the men of the Nibelungs. He said: 'On your feet, you heroes, you must go to Sivrit!' They leapt from their beds and were all at the 502
ready. A thousand bold knights were soon well clad. They went to where Sivrit stood. A splendid welcome took place there, their actions matching their words. Many candles were kindled. Clary* 503
was poured out for Sivrit. He thanked them all for coming so quickly. He said: 'You must leave here and sail across the sea with me.' He found that those bold and worthy heroes were most ready to do so. 504

Some three thousand warriors had soon arrived. A thousand of the best were then chosen from them. Their helmets were brought for them and the rest of their armour, for Sivrit wanted to lead them into Prünhilt's land. 505

He said: 'You worthy knights, one thing I would tell you: you must wear most sumptuous clothes at court there, for many lovely women will be there to see us. Therefore you must adorn yourselves with good garments.' 506

Early one morning they set off. What bold companions Sivrit had won! They led good chargers and wore splendid garments. In knightly
507 fashion they entered Prünhilt's land.

In the turrets the lovely maidens stood. The queen then said: 'Does anyone know who those are whom I see afloat, so far off on the sea?
508 They carry splendid sails, whiter even than snow.'

Then the King of the Rhineland said: 'They are my vassals. I left them close by here when we came on this journey. I have sent for them. Now, lady, they have arrived.'

509 Great attention was paid to the noble strangers. Then they saw Sivrit standing in splendid clothing at the prow of a ship, and many another man. The queen then said: 'Sir King, you must tell me, am I to welcome these guests, or should I deny them my
510 greeting?'

He said: 'You must walk towards them, out of the great hall, so that they clearly comprehend that we are glad to see them.' Then the queen did as the king counselled her. She greeted Sivrit before
511 all the others. They were given lodgings and their armour put into safe-keeping. So many guests had arrived in that land that there was jostling on all sides between the bands. The valiant warriors were
512 then resolved on returning home to Burgundy.

The queen then said: 'I would hold any man in high favour who would share out my silver and my gold to the king's guests and mine—I have so much of it!'

513 Dancwart, King Giselher's vassal,* responded: 'Most noble queen, let me have charge of the keys. I trust I can share out your gold in such a way', said the bold knight, 'that any disgrace I gain by it shall
514 be mine alone.' He showed in abundance how generous he was. When Hagen's brother took charge of the keys, the hero's hands offered so many rich gifts that anyone who asked for a mark was given so much
515 that all the poor folk could rejoice. He gave out some hundreds of pounds without counting the cost. Plenty of people who had never before worn such splendid clothes walked out of the great hall in rich raiment.

516 The queen came to hear of this—she was far from pleased. The noble lady then said: 'Sir King, I would rather that your chamberlain were not so intent on leaving me without garments. He is squandering all my gold! I would forever hold anyone dear who might
517 yet prevent this. He doles out such rich gifts—indeed, the knight

believes I am on my deathbed! I want to keep my wealth for a while yet. Moreover, I trust I'm well capable myself of squandering what my father bequeathed me. Never did a queen acquire so generous a chamberlain.'* 518

Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'Lady, let it be told you that the King of the Rhineland has so much gold and garb to give that we have no need to take any of Prünhilt's clothes away from here.' 519

'No!' said the queen. 'Allow me, for my part, to fill twenty panniers with gold and silk, which my hands will give out when we arrive over in Gunther's land.' 520

They loaded her trunks with precious stones. Her own chamberlain had to be present. She did not want to trust it to Giselher's vassal. Gunther and Hagen started to laugh at that. 521

Then the queen said: 'To whom shall I entrust my lands? Before we depart, your hand and mine must provide a ruler for them.'

The noble king replied: 'Now command someone to come forward whom you favour for this, and we shall have him be overlord.' 522

The lady saw one of her most nobly-born kindred standing by her. He was her mother's brother. The maiden said to him: 'Now let my castles and also my lands be commended to you until such time as King Gunther's hand passes judgement here.' 523

Then she chose two thousand men from her retinue who were to travel with her to Burgundy, along with those thousand warriors from the land of the Nibelungs. They made ready for the journey. They were seen to ride down to the shore. Prünhilt took eighty-six women 524 along with her, and also some hundred maidens, most fair of person. They delayed no longer; they were in haste to leave. Ah, what tears were shed by those they left at home there! In courteous decorum 525 she departed from her own land. She kissed the close friends she found by her. After a good leave-taking, they embarked. The lady never returned to her father's land. 526

On the journey various entertainments were then to be heard. They had all kinds of pastimes at their disposal. A good sea-breeze assisted their journey. They left the land, full of joy. 527

Prünhilt did not as yet want to make love with Lord Gunther during the journey. Their pleasures were deferred until they had arrived in their castle in the city of Worms and a festivity was held, and there they afterwards arrived with their heroes, to their great joy. 528

NINTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT WAS SENT TO WORMS

WHEN they had been underway for a full nine days, Hagen of Tronege said: 'Hear now what I tell you. We are tardy in sending tidings to Worms on the Rhine. Your messengers ought to be in Burgundy
529 by now.'

King Gunther replied: 'You tell me nothing but the truth. No one could be as suitable for that journey as you, friend Sir Hagen. Ride now
530 to my land. No one can give them a better account of our expedition.'

Hagen answered: 'I am no good messenger. Let me stay as chamberlain here. I will remain on the waves among the ladies, guarding their garments,* until we have brought them into the land of Bur-
531 gundy. Ask Sivrit, now, to head the embassy. He is well capable of carrying it out with courage and strength. If he refuses to go on the journey, you must ask him courteously and in friendship, for love of
532 your sister, to do what you request.'

Gunther sent for the warrior. He came as soon he was found. Gunther said: 'Since we are nearing my homelands now, I ought to send messengers to my dear sister and also to my mother, to tell them
533 that we are nearing the Rhine. That is what I desire of you, Sivrit. Carry out my purpose now, and I shall always be at your service,' said the worthy knight.*

At first Sivrit, that valiant warrior, declined, until Gunther be-
534 gan to press him urgently. He said: 'You must ride there, for my sake, and also for the sake of Kriemhilt, the fair maiden, and then the proud maid and I will always reward you.'

When Sivrit heard those words, the warrior was most willing.
535 'Now tell me all that you wish to be said. Nothing will be kept back. I will gladly carry out the errand for the sake of that beautiful maiden. Why should I refuse anything for the sake of her whom
536 I hold in my heart? All that you command in her name will be done.'

'In that case, tell my mother, Queen Uote, that we are in high spirits on this journey of ours. Let my brothers know how we have fared. You
537 must also tell our friends these tidings. Keep nothing back from my fair sister. Give her my homage, and that of Prünhilt, and greet also my retinue and all my vassals. I have accomplished what my heart always

strove for! And tell Ortwin, my dear kinsman, to have seating set up 538
at Worms on the Rhine, and my other kinsmen must also be told of
this. I want to hold a great festivity, together with Prünhilt. And tell 539
my sister that as soon as she has heard that I, together with my guests,
have landed, she is to take pains to give my beloved a good welcome.
I will always be indebted to Kriemhilt for that.' 540

Lord Sivrit quickly took his leave of Lady Prünhilt, as well became
him, and of all her retinue. Then he rode to the Rhine. There could
be no better messenger in this world. He rode to Worms, then, with 541
twenty-four warriors. He arrived without the king. When that was
told, all the household was troubled by anxiety. They feared that
their lord lay dead in foreign lands. 542

Then the messengers dismounted from their horses. They were in
high spirits. Quickly Giselher, the young, noble king, came towards
them, and Gernot his brother. How quick he was to speak, when he
saw that King Gunther was not with Sivrit: 'Welcome, Sivrit! You 543
must tell me where you have left my brother the king. I believe Prün-
hilt's strength has taken him from us. In that case his noble love of
her has cost us very dear!' 544

'Have no fear of that! My companion-in-arms sends his greet-
ings to you and his kinsmen. I left him hale and hearty. He has sent
me to you to be his messenger, bringing tidings into your land. 545
You must see to it with all speed, no matter how it comes about,
that I see the queen and your sister. I am to let them hear what mes-
sages Gunther and Prünhilt have sent them. They are both in fine
fettle.' 546

Young Giselher replied: 'In that case, you must go to her. You will
have brought my sister much joy by this. She is also very anxious about
my brother. The maiden will be glad to see you, I guarantee you.' 547

Then Lord Sivrit said: 'All that I can do to serve her will be done
most willingly and loyally. Who is to tell the ladies, now, that I want
to go to them?'

Giselher, that most handsome man, then acted as messenger. 548
Bold Giselher said to his mother, and also to his sister, as soon as he
saw them: 'Sivrit, the hero from the Netherlands, has come to us.
My brother Gunther has sent him here to the Rhine. He brings us 549
tidings of how things stand with the king. You must give him leave
now to come to court. He will tell the true tidings of what has hap-
pened over in Iceland.'

550 As yet the noble ladies were no strangers to great anxiety. They leapt for their robes and dressed themselves at once. They asked Sivrit to come to court. He did so willingly, glad as he was to see
551 them. Noble Kriemhilt spoke graciously to him: 'Welcome, Sir Sivrit, renowned knight! Where is my brother Gunther, that noble, mighty king? I believe we've lost him because of Prünhilt's strength. Alas for
552 me, poor maiden, that ever I was born into this world!'

The bold knight replied: 'Now give me my messenger's bread!* You most lovely ladies are weeping without need. I left him hale and hearty, I assure you. He and Prünhilt have sent me here to you both
553 with these tidings. Gunther and his beloved offer you devoted service and loving affection, most noble queen. Cease your weeping, now. They will soon arrive.'

554 Not for a long time had she heard such dear tidings. Her weeping over, she wiped her lovely eyes on snow-white sleeves. She began to thank the messenger for the tidings that had come to her there.
555 Much sadness and many tears had then been banished from her. She asked the messenger to sit down. He did so most readily. Then the lovely princess said: 'I would be far from sorry to give you my gold as a messenger's reward. You are too wealthy for that, yet I will always
556 hold you dear.'

'Even if I alone possessed thirty lands,' said he, 'yet I would still gladly receive a gift from your hands.'

The virtuous princess replied: 'Then that shall be done.'

557 She ordered her chamberlain to fetch the messenger's reward. She gave him twenty-four torques inlaid with precious stones as a reward. Yet the hero was not disposed to keep them. He at once gave them to the most intimate members of her retinue, whom he saw
558 present in the chamber. Kriemhilt's mother most graciously offered him her service.

'I am to tell you tidings', said the bold warrior, 'of what Gunther asks of you when he comes to the Rhine. If you carry this out, lady,
559 he will always hold you dear. I heard him ask that you should give a good welcome to his wealthy guests, and should do him the favour of riding out beyond Worms to the shore to meet him.* The king has
560 urged you to do this out of your true loyalty.'

The lovely princess replied: 'I am most willing to do so. No service that I can do for him will be refused. Let it be done in loving loyalty.'
561 Her colour deepened out of joy.

No prince's messenger was ever better welcomed. If Kriemhilt had dared to kiss him, the lady would have done so. How charmingly he parted from the ladies!

Then the Burgundians did as Sivrit advised them. Sindolt and 562
Hunolt, and Sir Rumolt, were then obliged to be at their busiest, setting up the seating on the shore outside Worms. The kings' stewards were found to be hard at work then. Ortwin and Gere by no 563
means wished to omit to send for their friends, wherever they might be, telling them of the festivity that was to be held there. The beautiful maidens donned their finery for the occasion. The palace and its 564
walls were all decorated* to meet the guests. Gunther's great hall was well furnished with tables for the many strangers. This great festivity began most joyfully. From all directions the three kings' kinsmen, 565
who had been sent for to greet those who were to arrive, rode along the roads through the land. Many sumptuous garments were taken out of their folds there. 566

Soon the tidings were told that Prünhilt's friends had been seen on horseback. Much ado arose then among the crowds of people in Burgundy. Ah, what bold knights were to be found in both parties there! 567

Then fair Kriemhilt said: 'Let those of my maidens who want to be with me at the reception seek their very best clothes out of the chests. Then the guests will speak words of praise and honour about us.' 568

Then the warriors also arrived. They ordered that the splendid saddles, all of red gold, should be brought over. The ladies were to ride to Worms on the Rhine. No better harness might ever be found anywhere. Ah, what bright gold shone from the palfreys! Great 569
numbers of gems gleamed from the reins. Golden mounting-stools, placed upon fine bright phellel-silk, were brought for the ladies. They were in joyful spirits. In the courtyard the palfreys stood ready 570
for the noble damsels (as I have told you). The horses were seen to wear slender breast-straps, of the best silk of which any tongue might tell. They saw eighty-six ladies emerge from their chambers, wear- 571
ing head-dresses.* Those beautiful ladies walked in great splendour over to Kriemhilt, wearing bright clothing. Then many comely maidens came up in their finery, fifty-four of them from Burgundy. 572
They were, moreover, the highest-born to be found anywhere there. They saw them walk forward, with blonde hair beneath bright braids. All that the king had requested before had been attentively

573 carried out. They wore rich phellel-silks, the best to be found, before the warriors who were strangers to them—as many good garments as befitted their abundant beauty. A man would have to be in poor spir-
574 its to wish any of them ill. Many garments of sable and ermine were to be found there. Many an arm and hand was elegantly adorned by torques, over the silks they were to wear there. No one could describe
575 to you in full the efforts to which they had put themselves. Hands in great numbers had flung about them many skilfully sewn girdles, rich and long, over bright dresses of phellel-silk from Araby, on top of precious skirts of farandine.* The noble damsels were in the high-
576 est of spirits. Many a fair maiden was laced in by braids, most prettily sewn. Any one of them would have been distressed if her bright hue did not match her garments in radiance. No king's kin has such
577 a fair retinue nowadays. The lovely ladies having now put on their apparel, those who were to escort them immediately arrived, a great army of proud warriors. They carried along with them shields and
578 ashen spears in great numbers.

TENTH ADVENTURE

HOW PRÜNHILT WAS WELCOMED IN WORMS

On the other side of the Rhine they saw the king with his guests making his way to the shore,* with numerous companies. Many maidens could also be seen, their horses led by the reins. All those
579 who were to welcome them were in readiness. When the people from Iceland boarded the skiffs, and also Sivrit's men from the land of the Nibelungs, they made haste, rowing hard, to land on the shore on the
580 other side, where the king's friends were to be found.

Now hear also these tidings of the queen, Uote the most mighty—how she herself then rode there, bringing the maidens from the castle. Knights and maidens in great numbers made each other's acquaint-
581 ance there.

Duke Gere led Kriemhilt by the reins, but no further than the castle-gate. Bold Sivrit was to be at her service from then on—she was a beautiful girl. In time to come he would be well rewarded
582 by the damsel. Bold Ortwin rode alongside Lady Uote, with many knights and maidens keeping each other company. We can readily

aver that never were so many ladies seen alongside one another at such a great welcoming. 583

Magnificent bohorts in great numbers were seen, ridden by renowned heroes before beautiful Kriemhilt, all the way down to the skiffs. (It would have been ill if that had been overlooked!) Then many well-favoured ladies were helped down from their palfreys. 584

The king had crossed the river, with many noble guests. Ah, what sturdy shafts were broken before the ladies! Many shields were heard to clash in the charge there. Ah, what splendid shield-buckles resounded loudly in the collisions! 585

The lovely ladies stood in the harbour. Gunther and his guests disembarked from the skiffs. He himself led Prünhilt by the hand. Many bright gems and garments reflected one another there. With 586 great decorum Lady Kriemhilt then walked over to welcome Lady Prünhilt and her retinue. Bright hands were seen to push back hair-bands* there, as they kissed one another—that was a mark of courtesy. 587 Then the maiden Kriemhilt said courteously: 'I and my mother bid you welcome to these lands, as do all the loyal allies we have.' They then bowed there. The ladies embraced one another time and again. 588 Never was a more charming welcoming heard of than that which the two ladies bestowed upon the bride. Lady Uote and her daughter kissed her sweet mouth time and again. 589

When all of Prünhilt's ladies had landed on the shore, many well-favoured women were then taken by the hand, most charmingly, by handsome warriors. The beautiful maidens could be seen standing before Lady Prünhilt. It took a long time until all their greetings 590 had been exchanged. Many rosy mouths were kissed there! The powerful princesses were still standing next to one another. Renowned warriors in great numbers rejoiced at the sight. Then those who had 591 heard tell before that they would never have seen anyone as beautiful as those two ladies studied them with their eyes—it was no lie that had been told. Moreover, no trace of deception* was to be perceived in their persons. Those who knew how to judge ladies and lovely 592 persons praised Gunther's wife for her beauty. The discerning there said that they had observed more closely, and that Kriemhilt might readily be accounted more fair than Prünhilt. The maidens and mar- 593 ried women went up to one another. Fair figures in great numbers could be seen there, well adorned.

Silken tents and many splendid pavilions stood there, so that the
594 whole plain outside Worms was full to the brim. The king's kinsmen jostled one another there. Then Prünhilt and Kriemhilt, with all the other ladies, were told to go into the shade.* The knights of Bur-
595 gundy escorted them there.

Now the guests had also all mounted their chargers. Splendid jousts in great numbers pierced shields. So much dust was raised over the plain that it seemed as if the whole land were ablaze with
596 fire. Heroes won renown there. Maidens in great numbers observed the prowess of the warriors there. I think Sir Sivrit charged backwards and forwards in front of the tents, time and again, with his knights. He led a thousand handsome men from the land of the
597 Nibelungs.

Then Hagen of Tronege arrived at his lord's behest. The hero then parted the bohort amicably, so that the beautiful girls should not be
598 covered in dust. The guests soon obeyed, with no ill feeling. Then Lord Gernot said: 'Let the chargers stand until it begins to turn cool. Then we shall joust to serve fair women before the great hall. Make
599 sure that you are ready when the king wishes to ride.'

When the bohort was at an end all over the plain, the knights walked over to the ladies to converse pleasantly beneath many high pavilions, in the hope of great delights to come. There they passed
600 the time until they wished to ride further. Before evening drew in, when the sun went down and it began to turn cool, they postponed their ride no longer; many men and women headed off towards the
601 castle. Fair ladies in great numbers were gazed at with amorous eyes. Worthy heroes had ridden many of their clothes to rags there, as was the proud custom of the land, before the king dismounted outside the great hall. There the ladies were accorded such service as proud
602 heroes still practise.

Then the mighty queens were separated. Lady Uote and her daughter both went with their retinue into a most spacious chamber.
603 Everywhere joyful clamour was to be heard then. Seats were set up. The king wanted to go to table with his guests. Fair Prünhilt was then seen standing at his side. She wore a crown then in the king's land.
604 She did, indeed, have power in plenty.

We are told that seats were set up in great numbers for the people there, with good, broad tables laden with food. How little was lacking of what they needed there! Proud guests in great numbers were to be

seen then in the king's presence. The host's chamberlains brought 605
the water* in basins of red gold. There would be little point in anyone telling you that better service took place at any other prince's festivity—I wouldn't believe it! 606

Before the overlord of the Rhine took water, Lord Sivrit then acted as became him. He reminded him of his loyalty and what he had promised him before he saw Prünhilt at her home in Iceland. 607
He said: 'You must bear in mind the oath that your hand swore,* that if Lady Prünhilt ever came to this land you would give me your sister. What has become of those oaths? I underwent great hardship during your journey.' 608

The king replied to his guest: 'You do right to remind me. Indeed, my hand shall not commit perjury. I'll help you bring this about as best I can.'

Then they bade Kriemhilt go to court before the king. With her 609
fair maidens she came up to the hall. Giselher then leapt down a staircase: 'Now, bid these maidens turn back! None but my sister is to be here with the king!' 610

Then Kriemhilt was taken into the king's presence. Noble knights stood there from many princes' lands. They were ordered to stand in silence in the spacious hall. Lady Prünhilt had then made her way right up to the king's table. Then King Gunther said: 'Most comely 611
sister, fulfil my oath out of your own courtesy! I have promised you by oath to a warrior, and if he becomes your husband, then you will have carried out my wishes with great loyalty.' 612

The noble maiden replied: 'My dearest brother, there is no need for you to plead with me. It will always be my wish to carry out all that you command of me. I will gladly pledge myself to the man whom you, lord, give me for a husband.' 613

Sivrit blushed as a loving glance was bestowed on him. The warrior pledged himself to Lady Kriemhilt's service. They were told to stand next to one another in the ring.* They asked if she were willing to take the handsome man. She was somewhat embarrassed in 614
her maidenly modesty, yet such was fate and Sivrit's fortune that she did not wish at once to refuse him there. The noble King of the Netherlands pledged himself, for his part, to take her for his wife. 615
When he had made his vow, and the maiden hers, the lovely girl was most willing to be fondly embraced by Sivrit's arms there. The fair queen was then kissed before the heroes. 616

When that had happened, the retinue separated, and Sivrit was seen to sit with Kriemhilt in the seat facing Gunther.* Many men went to serve him there. The Nibelungs were seen to walk over together with
617 Sivrit.

The king had taken his seat, as had the maiden Prünhilt. Then she saw Kriemhilt—never had she grieved so greatly!—sitting next to Sivrit. She began to weep; her hot tears fell down her bright
618 cheeks.

Then the lord of the land said: 'What causes you, my lady, to let your bright eyes grow so dim? You have good cause to rejoice. My
619 land and my castles and many a handsome man are subject to you.'

'I have good cause to weep,' said the beautiful maiden. 'I am grieved to the heart because of your sister. I see her sitting close by
620 your bondsman. I must forever weep if she is to be so disgraced.'

King Gunther replied: 'It would be as well if you were silent. I shall tell you on another occasion the reason why I have given my sister to Sivrit. Indeed, her life with the warrior may always be
621 joyful.'

She said: 'I am sorry forever for her beauty, and also her good breeding. If I knew where I might go, I'd gladly flee so that I would never have to lie with you—unless you tell me why Kriemhilt
622 should be Sivrit's bride.'

The noble king replied: 'I'll tell you the reason. He possesses as many castles as I and broad lands. Rest assured of that. He is a king of great power. That's why I'm granting the admirable fair maiden
623 to him for his beloved.' Despite all the king told her, she was low in spirits.

Then worthy knights in great numbers hastened away from the tables. Their bohort grew so fierce that the whole castle resounded
624 with the clamour. The host was far from happy amongst his guests. He thought that he would rather be lying with the beautiful lady, and that great joy would befall him because of her. He began to cast
625 amorous glances at Lady Prünhilt.

The guests were asked to abandon their chivalric pursuits. The king wanted to go to bed with his wife. Before the steps of the hall Kriemhilt and Prünhilt then met. As yet there was no anger between
626 them.

Then their retinues came up without delay. Their wealthy chamberlains brought candles for them. The warriors, the two kings' vassals,

separated then. Many knights were then seen to leave with Sivrit. 627
The two lords went to where they were to lie for the night. Each of them then thought to conquer the charming ladies with love—that gave them good cheer. Sivrit's pleasure was indeed to prove great. 628

When Lord Sivrit lay with Kriemhilt and he caressed the damsel so charmingly with his noble love-making, she became as dear to him as his life. He would not have taken a thousand other women in exchange for her. I'll tell you no more of what he did with the lady. 629

Hear now tidings of how Gunther, that gallant knight, lay with Lady Prünhilt. He had often had greater comfort lying with other women. The people, both ladies and men, had left him; then the 630
chamber was quickly closed. He thought he was going to caress her lovely body—he was, however, a long way away from making her his wife as yet! In a shift of fine white linen she walked to the 631
bed. Then the noble knight thought: 'Now I've everything here that I ever desired in all my days!' She doubtless pleased him greatly by her beauty. 632

The noble king's hand quenched the candles. Then the bold knight walked over to where the lady lay. He lay down close to her, full of joy. The hero embraced the lovely lady. He could have made love to 633
her charmingly if the noble lady had let him. Yet she grew so very angry that it troubled him. He had thought to find a friend—instead he found the enmity of a foe. 634

She said: 'Noble knight, you must let it be. What you're hoping for can't come to pass. I want to remain a maiden still—be sure you mark this!—until I find out the truth of the matter.'

Then Gunther grew hostile towards her. He struggled for her love 635
and tore her clothes apart. The proud maiden then reached for a girdle, a strong braid that she wore about her waist. She then caused the king sorrow in abundance. She bound together his feet 636
and hands; she carried him over to a nail and hung him up on the wall. When he deprived her of her sleep, she forbade his love-making. Her strength had almost proved the death of him. 637

Then he who had thought himself master began to plead with her: 'Untie my bonds now, most noble queen. I don't believe I'll ever be the master of you, fair lady, and shall seldom lie so close to you again!' 638
She did not care how he fared, for she lay in all comfort there. He had to hang there all through the night until day broke, and the bright

morning shone through the windows. If his body had ever possessed
639 strength, there was little of it left.

'Now tell me, Sir Gunther, would it trouble you at all', said the beautiful maiden, 'if your chamberlains were to find you tied up by a lady's hand?'

640 The noble knight replied: 'That would cost you dear! Nor would I have much honour by it,' said the bold king. 'For the sake of your own repute let me come over to you now. Since my love-making causes you such great grief, I shall never again touch your clothes
641 with my hands.'

She quickly freed him then. When she had let him get up he went back over to the lady's bed. He lay down so far away from her that he very seldom touched her beautiful garments from then on. She,
642 for her part, was glad then to be spared. Then their retinue came in, bringing fresh clothes for them. That morning those were at their disposal in great abundance. No matter how well they conducted themselves, the lord of the land was sad enough, although he wore a
643 crown that day.*

According to the customs they practised and which were legally observed there, Gunther and Prünhilt delayed no longer, but went to the minster where mass was to be sung. Sir Sivrit also went to the
644 minster. A great press of people arose there. All that they required to do them royal honour on the way there, their crowns and also their robes, was prepared for them. Then they were given the Church's blessing. When that had been done, all four were seen to stand in
645 good spirits, wearing their crowns.

Many young men took sword there, six hundred or more, all in honour of the kings, let me tell you. Great joy arose in Burgundy. Shafts were heard resounding in the hands of the knights who had
646 taken sword there. In the windows the fair maidens sat; they saw the glint of shields in great numbers shining before them. The king had parted then from his vassals. No matter what pastimes
647 anyone else indulged in, he was seen to walk in sorrow.

He and Sivrit were in unequal mood. The noble, worthy knight well knew what troubled Gunther. He walked over to the king then. He
648 asked: 'How did you fare last night? You must tell me about it now.'

The host replied to the guest: 'I suffer disgrace and loss, for I have invited the foul fiend home to my house. When I thought to make love to her, she tied me up in tight bonds. She carried me over to

a nail and hung me high up on the wall. There I hung in fear through- 649
out the night until daybreak, before she untied me. How softly
she then lay! Let this complaint be made to you in confidence and
friendship!'

Strong Sivrit replied: 'I am truly sorry for that. I'll prove it to you, 650
if you've no objection. I'll bring it about that she lies so close to you
tonight that she'll never again be slow to give you her love.' Gunther
was happy to hear those words then, after the hardship he had
suffered. 651

Then Lord Sivrit said: 'You will come through this well. I believe
we fared unequally last night. Your sister Kriemhilt is dearer to me
than my life. Lady Prünhilt must become your wife before the night
is out.' He went on: 'I'll come to your chamber this very night in 652
secret, in my cloak of invisibility, so that no one will be aware of my
wiles. Then have the chamberlains go to their lodgings. Then I will 653
quench the pages' candles to show you that I am in the room. By that
sign you will know that I am willing to serve you. Thus I will compel
your wife to let you make love to her tonight, or else I will lose my
life.' 654

'Provided that you do not make love at all to my dear lady,' the
king replied, 'I am happy with this. Do to her otherwise all that you
will. Even if you were to take her life, I would leave it unavenged. She
is a terror of a woman!' 655

'I swear by my loyalty,' said Sivrit, 'that I will not make love to
her. I prefer your fair sister to all I have ever beheld.' Gunther readily
believed what Sivrit then promised. 656

The pleasures the knights took there brought about both joy and
peril. Bohorts and clamour were all forbidden when the ladies were to
go up to the great hall. Then the chamberlains bade the people make
way. The courtyard was cleared of chargers and of people. Each of the 657
ladies was led by a bishop, when they were to go to table before the
kings. Handsome men in great numbers followed them to the seats. 658
The king then sat down there in hopeful mood, in good spirits. He
was thinking hard on what Sivrit had promised him. That one day
seemed to him as long as a good thirty. All his thoughts were bent
on love of his lady. He could hardly wait for them to leave the tables. 659
Then they had both the fair Prünhilt and Lady Kriemhilt go to their
chambers. Ah, what bold knights were to be seen standing before the
queens! 660

Lord Sivrit sat, full of love, together with his wife, with joy without rancour. She was caressing his hands with her own white hands,
661 until he vanished from her sight—she didn't know when! Caressing him, and then seeing him no longer, the queen said to his retinue: 'I wonder greatly where the king may have gone. Who has taken his
662 hands out of mine?'

She let the matter lie. He had gone, then, to where he found many chamberlains standing with candles. He set about quenching the
663 pages' lights. Gunther knew then that it was Sivrit. Gunther was well aware of what he had in mind. He bade the maidens and ladies leave the chamber then. Once that had been done, the powerful king himself locked the door, quickly sliding two very sturdy bolts across
664 it. Quickly he hid the lights under the bedclothes.* Then strong Sivrit set about playing his game—there was nothing else for it!—with the fair maiden. That caused King Gunther both joy and
665 sorrow. Sivrit laid himself down close to the damsel. She said: 'Now let it be, Gunther, dearly though you desire it, or else you will suffer the same hardship as before!' (The lady was to cause bold Sivrit harm
666 in time to come.)

He refrained from speech, concealing himself. Gunther could clearly hear, although he could not see him at all, that nothing intimate passed between them there. They had very little comfort in
667 that bed! Sivrit acted as if he were Gunther, that powerful king. He embraced the admirable maiden. She threw him out of the bed, down
668 onto a seat nearby, so that his head banged loudly against a stool. The bold warrior leapt up again with all his might, wanting to make another attempt. When he set about overcoming her, she caused him much
669 pain. I doubt if such defiance will ever be made by a lady again.

When he would not give up, the maiden then leapt up: 'You are not to tear apart my shift, so white as it is! You are most uncouth—this will cost you dear! I'll make the consequences clear to you!' said
670 the comely maiden.

She grasped the mettlesome knight in her arms. She wanted to tie him up as she had done the king, so that she might be at peace in the bed. The lady had avenged herself abundantly upon Gunther
671 for tearing her clothes. What use was his great strength and massive might to Sivrit? She showed her superior strength to the warrior. She carried him by sheer force—he had no choice!—and squeezed him
672 roughly between the wall and a chest.

'Alas!' thought the warrior. 'If I am now to lose my life at the hands of a maiden, then all women will forever be high and mighty in their dealings with their husbands after this, little though they act like that now!' 673

The king could hear the struggle clearly. He feared for Sivrit. Sivrit was greatly ashamed and began to wax wrath. Exerting his monstrous strength, he sat upright. Perilously he made another attempt on Lady Prünhilt. It seemed a long time to the king before 674 he overcame her. She gripped his hands so tightly that the blood spurted from his nails—that hurt the hero hard! Yet he was to make the haughty maiden take back the monstrous desire* she had spoken 675 of before. The king heard all this, though he did not speak. Sivrit thrust her onto the bed, causing her to scream out loud. His strength caused her anguish in abundance. Then she reached down to her side 676 to the braid, intent on tying him up. His hand then prevented it with such strength that her limbs and all her body creaked. It was that which ended the battle—then she became Gunther's wife. 677

She said: 'Noble king, you must let me live! I will make full amends for all that I have done to you. Never again shall I defy your noble love. I have found out for certain that you can be a lady's master.' 678

Sivrit stood back as if he wanted to take off his clothes, leaving the maiden lying there. He took a golden ring off her finger, without the noble queen ever noticing it. He also took her girdle, a fine braid. 679 I don't know if he did that out of his high spirits.* He gave it to his wife; that was to cost him dear in time to come.

Then Gunther and the beautiful maiden lay with one another. 680 He caressed her lovingly, as well became him. She was then obliged to renounce her anger and her shame. His intimacies caused her to become a little pale. Oh, how much of her great strength abandoned her because of that love-making! After that she was no stronger, indeed, 681 than any other woman. He made ardent love to the beautiful lady. If she were to try to resist again, how would that have helped her? Gunther and his love-making had done away with all that. 682

How truly lovingly she then lay with him, with amorous affection, until bright day dawned! Meanwhile Lord Sivrit had gone out of the chamber to where he was warmly welcomed by a certain well-favoured lady. He prevented her asking the question that was in 683 her mind, hiding from her for a very long time what he had brought her, until she wore a crown in his own land. As for what he ought to have given her, how little of that he left undone! 684

The lord of the land was in far better spirits the following morning than he had been before. This brought great joy to many nobles in all his land. Many services were rendered to those whom he had invited
685 to his castle. The festivity then lasted for a fortnight, the clamour caused by the various pleasures that are rightly practised on such occasions never ceasing all the while. The king's expenditure weighed
686 very dear. The noble host's kinsmen, at the command of the king, gave away, to do him honour, clothes and bright red gold, chargers, and also silver, to great numbers of strangers. Those who desired
687 gifts there departed in good spirits.

Lord Sivrit of the Netherlands, along with a thousand of his men, gave away all the garments they had brought to the Rhine, as also their chargers together with their saddles. They knew how to live in
688 splendour! Even before all those rich gifts had been flung away there, it seemed to those who wanted to return home that they had been there too long. Never were guests given greater hospitality. Thus the
689 festivity ended, as Gunther the warrior wanted.

ELEVENTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT RETURNED TO HIS HOMELAND WITH HIS WIFE

When the guests had all departed, Sigmunt's son said to his retinue: 'We must also prepare to return home to my lands.' That
690 brought pleasure to his wife when the lady learned of it.* She said to her husband: 'When are we to depart? I would advise against any great haste on my part. Before we leave, my brothers must share their
691 lands with me.' It grieved Sivrit to learn of this from Kriemhilt.

The princes approached him, and all three said: 'Now know, Sir Sivrit, that we are loyally at your service until death.' He bowed to
692 the knights when they treated him so graciously.

'Moreover, we must share with you', said young Giselher, 'the lands and castles that are our property, and all the wide realms that are subject
693 to us. You must have a good share of these, together with Kriemhilt.'

Sigmunt's son said to the princes, when he had heard and seen those lords' resolve: 'May God forever bless your inheritance, and also the people that dwell there. Yet my dearly beloved can readily dis-
694 pense with the share you would give her. There where she is to wear

a crown, if I live to see it, she may well become wealthier than anyone now alive. Otherwise, whatever you command, I am at your service.' 695

Then Lady Kriemhilt said: 'If you will dispense with the inheritance, yet it is no small matter with regard to the Burgundian warriors. A king might gladly lead them into his land. My dear brothers' hands ought, indeed, to share them with me.' 696

Then Lord Gernot said: 'Now take all that you will. You'll find many here who'll gladly ride with you. We'll give you a thousand men out of thirty hundred warriors; let them be your retinue at home.'

Kriemhilt then set about sending for Hagen of Tronege, and 697 also Ortwin, to ask whether they, and also their kinsmen, would be Kriemhilt's. Hagen waxed wrath at that. He said: 'Indeed, Gunther cannot give us away to anyone in the world! Let others of your 698 retinue follow you, for you know full well the custom of the men of Tronege—we must stand by the kings here at court. We shall go on serving those whom we have followed hitherto.' 699

They let the matter rest. Then they took steps to depart. Lady Kriemhilt gathered for her noble retinue thirty-two maidens and five hundred men. Count Eckewart followed Sivrit to his homeland. 700 They all took their leave, both knights and squires, maidens and ladies, as was only right. They parted amid kisses. In joyful spirits they departed from King Gunther's land. Then the Burgundians 701 accompanied their kinsfolk for a great distance on the roads. Their overnight quarters were ordered to be readied for them everywhere they wished, throughout the kings' lands. Soon messengers were sent off to Sigmunt, to let him, and also Sigelint, know that his son wished 702 to return home from Worms on the Rhine, together with Lady Uote's daughter, most beautiful Kriemhilt. No tidings might ever be dearer to them than those. 703

'Happy am I,' Sigmunt then said, 'that I have lived to see the day when most beautiful Kriemhilt is to walk beneath a crown here! My inheritance will be greatly enhanced by this! My son, noble Sivrit, shall be king here himself.' 704

Then Lady Sigelint gave presents of red samite* in great numbers, silver and heavy gold—that was her messenger's bread. She rejoiced at the tidings she had then heard. Her retinue clad themselves with care, as well befitted them. 705

The messengers told them who was coming with Sivrit into the land. Then they ordered seating to be set up at once, there where

Sivrit was to walk beneath a crown before his allies. King Sigmunt's
706 men then rode to meet him. If anyone was ever better welcomed than those famed heroes in Sigmunt's land, I have no knowledge of it. Fair Sigelint rode a day's distance from home towards Kriemhilt, together with many beautiful ladies, to meet the strangers. Gallant
707 knights rode in their train. Strangers and acquaintances alike suffered hardship, until they arrived at the spacious castle which was called
708 Xanten, where they were later to wear crowns.

Smiling, Sigelint and Sigmunt kissed Kriemhilt affectionately many times, and also Sivrit. Their sorrow was dispelled. All their
709 retinue were given a warm welcome. They asked that the guests be brought before Sigmunt's hall. The fair damsels were lifted down from their palfreys. Men in great numbers were present there who
710 took pains to serve the fair ladies.

Although the festivity in the Rhineland had met with great renown, here the heroes were given even better garments, more splendid than any they had worn in all their days. Great marvels
711 might be told of their wealth when they resided there in high honour and abundant riches. What gold-coloured sleeves their retinue wore, with pearls and precious stones inlaid! Thus Sigelint, the noble
712 queen, took great care of her retinue.

Then Lord Sigmunt said before his allies: 'I proclaim to all Sivrit's kinsmen: he is to wear my crown before these warriors.'

713 The men of the Netherlands were glad to hear those tidings. Sigmunt commended to Sivrit his crown, his lawgiving powers, and also the land. From then on he was lord over all he found before him in court, where it was for him to pass judgement. This was done in
714 such a manner that fair Kriemhilt's husband was held in great awe.

He lived in such high honour, it is true, dispensing justice as the crown-wearer until the tenth year came, and the most beautiful lady
715 gave birth to a son. That met with the wishes of the king's kinsmen. They made haste to baptize him, and gave him the name of Gunther after his uncle. He had no need to be ashamed of that. If he took after his kinsmen, he would prosper. They took great care over his
716 upbringing, as was his due.

About that time Lady Sigelint died. Then noble Uote's daughter had all the power over the lands, as well befitted such wealthy ladies. There were plenty who grieved then that death had taken Sigelint
717 from them.

Now, over there by the Rhine in the land of the Burgundians, so we hear tell, fair Prünhilt had borne powerful Gunther a son. For love of the hero he was named Sivrit. With what great care they had 718
him guarded! Noble Gunther assigned him tutors who well knew how to bring him up as a deserving knight. (Ah, what misfortune his friends afterwards suffered!) 719

Many tales were told, time and again, of the constant, true renown of the gallant warriors who lived in Sigmunt's land, as held also for Gunther and his exalted kinsmen. The land of the Nibelungs was sub- 720
ject to Sivrit in Xanten—none of his kinsmen was ever wealthier—as were also Schilbunc's warriors, and the possessions of them both. The valiant hero held his head the higher for this. The brave warrior now 721
possessed the greatest hoard any hero ever gained, apart from those who had held it before; he had won it with his own hands, fighting before the mountain, and slaying gallant knights in great numbers for it. He enjoyed honour to a perfect degree, and even if that were not so, 722
it would have to be conceded that the noble warrior was one of the best who ever mounted a horse. People feared his might, and rightly so. 723

TWELFTH ADVENTURE

HOW GUNTHER INVITED SIVRIT TO THE FESTIVITY

All this time Gunther's wife was thinking: 'How is it that Lady Kriemhilt holds her head so high? After all, her husband Sivrit is our vassal. He has paid us little homage for a long time now.' She bore this 724
in her heart, concealing it well. It was a great sorrow to her that they were far away from her, and that homage was paid so seldom to her from Sivrit's land. She would gladly have found out how that had come about. 725
She questioned the king if it might perhaps happen that she should see Kriemhilt again. She spoke in private of what she had in mind. The lord of Burgundy was none too pleased at her words. 726

'How might we bring them here to this land?' said the mighty king. 'That would be impossible. They reside too far off from us. I daren't ask it of them.'

Prünhilt answered him with cunning: 'No matter how powerful a 727
king's vassal might be, he ought not to desist from carrying out his lord's bidding.'

Gunther smiled at her words. However often he saw Sivrit, he
728 didn't count it as homage to him.

She said: 'Dearest lord, to please me, help me to invite Sivrit, and also your sister, to this land, so that we may see them here. Indeed,
729 nothing could ever give me greater pleasure. Whenever I think upon your sister's courtesy and her well-bred disposition, how I rejoice in that, and in how we sat together when I first became your wife! It is
730 an honour for her to love bold Sivrit.'

She expressed this wish so often that in the end the king said: 'Well, let me tell you, I have never beheld guests so gladly. It is no hardship to have you thus plead with me. I will send my messengers
731 to the two of them, to invite them to come to us by the Rhine.'

Then the queen said: 'In that case, you must tell me when you wish to send for them, or on what days our dear friends are to arrive in this
732 land. Let me know whom you want to send there.'

'I will do so,' said the prince. 'I will have thirty of my men ride there.' He bade those come before him. He gave them tidings to take to Sivrit's
733 land. In her joy, Prünhilt gave them garments of great splendour.

Then King Gunther said: 'You warriors must say to mighty Sivrit, and also to my sister—keep nothing back of the message I send—that
734 no one in the world could hold them more dear. And request that they both may come to us to the Rhineland. My lady and I will forever be grateful if they do so. Before the next solstice he and his men shall see
735 great numbers here who grant him high honour. Offer my homage to King Sigmunt, and tell him that I and my allies are always well-disposed towards him. And tell my sister also not to omit to ride to see
736 her friends—no festivity ever became her better.'

Prünhilt and Uote, and all the ladies to be found there, sent their homage to Sivrit's land, to the lovely ladies there, and many a bold warrior.

Armed with the counsel of the king's allies, the messengers set
737 off. They were well equipped for their journey. Their horses and garments had all been made ready for them. Then they left the land. They were in haste to set off on their journey. The king ordered that
738 the messengers be well protected by escorts.

Within three weeks they came riding into the land of Nibelung's castle, where they had been sent, in the borderlands of Norway.* There they found the warrior. The messengers' horses were very weary after
739 the long roads. Sivrit and Kriemhilt were both then told that knights

had arrived who wore such clothing as was customary in Burgundy at that time. Kriemhilt leapt up from a bed on which she lay resting. 740
Then she asked a maiden to go to a window. The maiden saw bold Gere standing in the courtyard, together with his companions who had been sent there. What dear tidings she found to dispel her heart's sorrow! 741

She said to the king: 'See now where they stand! Those men walking with mighty Gere in the courtyard have been sent down the Rhine to us by my brother Gunther!'

Then mighty Sivrit said: 'Let them be made welcome!' 742

The whole household ran to see them. Each of them then addressed the messengers as graciously as he possibly could. Lord Sigmunt was heartily pleased at their arrival. 743

Then Gere and his men were given lodgings. They ordered that their horses be stabled. The messengers went over to where Lord Sivrit sat beside Kriemhilt. They had been given permission to go to court, and therefore did so. The host and his wife rose to their feet 744
at once. Gere from the land of the Burgundians and his companions-in-arms, Gunther's men, were warmly welcomed. Mighty Gere was asked to walk over and be seated. 745

'Allow us to convey our message before we go and sit down, we way-weary guests. Let us stand for the time being. We are to tell you the tidings that Gunther and Prünhilt have sent you—they are in fine fettle. And hear too the messages sent by Lady Uote, your mother, 746
young Giselher, and also Lord Gernot, and the best of your kinsmen—it was they that sent us here. They offer their homage to you from Gunther's land.' 747

'Now God reward them!' said Sivrit. 'I have complete faith in their loyalty and goodness, as one ought to trust in one's friends; the same holds for their sister. You must tell us tidings. Are our dear friends in high spirits at home there? Has anyone done my in-laws an injury 748
since we parted from them? You must let me know if this is so. I will always help them loyally, until their foes must have good reason to regret my service!' 749

Gere the margrave, a doughty warrior, replied: 'They are in high spirits, as their great honour merits. They invite you to a festivity by the Rhine. They would be very glad to see you—rest assured of that. 750
And ask my lady to go there with you. When the winter is at an end, before the next solstice, they would like to see you.'

Mighty Sivrit then said: 'That could hardly be.' 751

Then Gere of Burgundy spoke again: 'Your mother Uote urges this upon you, nor should you deny Gernot and Giselher anything.
752 I hear people lament daily that you are so far away from them. My lady Prünhilt and all her maidens look forward to this, and it would put them in high spirits if it might be that they should see you again.'

753 These tidings seemed good to fair Kriemhilt. Gere was her kinsman. The host bade him be seated. He ordered that wine be poured for the guests. That was delayed no longer. By then Sigmunt had also arrived to see the messengers. The lord addressed the Burgundians
754 amicably: 'Welcome, you warriors, you men of Gunther! Since Sivrit, my son, won Kriemhilt for his wife, we ought to see you more often
755 here in this land, if you value our friendship.'

They said that they would gladly go there whenever he wished. Happiness relieved them of much great weariness. They bade the messengers be seated and brought in dishes for them. Sivrit ordered
756 that food be given to his guests in abundance.

They were obliged to remain there for a full nine days. By that time the bold knights were complaining that they were not to ride back to
757 their land. By then King Sivrit had sent for his allies. He asked what they advised about whether they should ride to the Rhine. 'Gunther, my friend, has sent for me—he and his kinsmen—to invite me to a festivity. Well, I'd gladly go to see him, except that his land lies too
758 far off. And they ask that Kriemhilt should go with me. Advise me, now, dear friends, in what fashion am I to go there? Even if I were to wage campaigns for them in thirty lands, Sivrit's hands would still be
759 willing to serve them there.'

Then his warriors said: 'If you are of a mind to make the journey to the festivity, we will advise what you should do. You should ride to the Rhine with a thousand warriors. Thus you may appear with high
760 honour over there amongst the Burgundians.'

Then Lord Sigmunt of the Netherlands said: 'If you want to go to the festivity, why do you not tell me of it? If it causes you no shame, then I'll ride there with you. I'll take a hundred knights to swell your
761 company.'

'If you wish to ride with us, dearest father,' said bold Sivrit, 'I shall be delighted. Before twelve days have passed, I will leave my lands.'

762 All who then desired them were given horses, and also garments. When the noble king had resolved upon the journey, they bade the bold, worthy messengers ride back. Sivrit sent tidings to his

in-laws in the Rhineland that he would most willingly be at their festivity there. 763

Sivrit and Kriemhilt, so we hear tell, gave so much to the messengers that their palfreys could not carry it home to their lands—he was a wealthy man. Rejoicing, they drove off their sturdy packhorses. 764

Sivrit, and also Sigmunt, gave garments to their retinue. Count Eckewart gave immediate orders that ladies' clothing should be sought out—the best to be found or that anyone could procure in all of Sivrit's land. They set about preparing the saddles and the shields. 765 They gave to the knights and ladies who were to ride there with them whatever they wished, so that nothing was lacking. Sivrit took splendid guests in great numbers with him to his friends. 766

The messengers were in great haste along the roads to their land. Sir Gere arrived in Burgundy then. He was warmly welcomed. Then the messengers dismounted from their chargers and palfreys, outside Gunther's hall. Young and old alike walked over, as is still the practice, to ask for tidings. 767 Then the worthy knight said: 'When I tell the tidings to the king, you will hear them soon enough.' He walked with his companions into Gunther's presence. 768

The king leapt from his seat, rejoicing greatly. Fair Prünhilt thanked them then for returning so rapidly. Gunther said to the messengers: 'How fares Sivrit, who has brought me much happiness?' 769

Bold Gere replied: 'He blushed for joy there, he and your sister. Never did any man send such loyal tidings to his friends as did Lord Sivrit to you, and also his father.' 770

Then the noble king's wife said to the margrave: 'Now tell me, is Kriemhilt coming to us? Does her fair person retain any of the courtesy she commanded so well?'

'She will certainly come,' replied Sir Gere. 771

Uote then bade the messengers be quick to come before her. From her questions it was apparent that she was glad to hear that Kriemhilt was still in good health. Gere said in what health he had found her, and that she would arrive there shortly. 772

Nor did the messengers conceal at court the gifts Lord Sivrit had given them. The gold and also the garments were brought forward to be seen by the three kings' vassals. They gave thanks for the great generosity they had met with there. 773

'It is easy for him', said Hagen then, 'to give so readily. He couldn't squander it all away, even if he were to live forever. His hands

hold the hoard of the Nibelungs. Ah, if that should ever come to
774 Burgundy!'

All the retinue rejoiced that they were to come. The three kings' vassals were about their business early and late. They began then
775 to set up seating for great numbers of people. Bold Hunolt and Sir Sindolt had a great deal to do, ordering stewards and cupbearers to set up many benches. Lord Ortwin also helped them in this.
776 Gunther thanked them for it. The lord of the kitchen, Rumolt—how well he soon set his underlings in order! Huge cauldrons in great numbers, pots and pans—oh, how many were to be found there! They then prepared the dishes for those who were to come to that
777 land.

THIRTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT WENT WITH HIS WIFE TO THE FESTIVITY

Let us leave them about their business now, and tell how Lady Kriemhilt, together with her maidens, travelled from the land of the Nibelungs to the Rhine. Never did packhorses carry so many sump-
778 tuous garments. Lots of trunks were sent ahead along the roads. Sivrit the warrior then rode to his destination, together with his friends and also the queen, anticipating a joyful arrival. (Afterwards
779 great grief was to be inflicted upon them all.)

They left Sivrit's baby, Kriemhilt's son, back at home—that had to be. Their journey to the foreign court cost him much sorrow.
780 Never again did the child see his father and his mother. Lord Sigmunt also rode there with them. If he had known for certain what would happen afterwards at the festivity, he would have seen none of it.
781 Never could a worse fate befall his dear friends. Messengers were sent ahead to tell the tidings of their journey. Then many of Uote's allies and Gunther's vassals rode to meet them with a joyous
782 company. The host went to great trouble to greet his guests.

He walked over to where Prünhilt was sitting: 'Now, how was it my sister welcomed you when you arrived in my lands? You must welcome Sivrit's wife in the same way.'

'I will do so,' said she, 'and willingly. She is dear to me, as is only
783 right.'

Then the mighty king said: 'They will come to us tomorrow morning. If you wish to welcome them, set about it soon, and let us not wait for them here in the castle. Never at any time have guests come who are so truly dear to me.' 784

Prünhilt then bade her maidens and her ladies at once seek out fine clothing, the best to be found, for her retinue to wear before the guests. They were most willing to do so, it goes without saying. Gunther's 785 vassals also hastened to wait upon them then. The host gathered all his warriors about him. Then the queen rode off in much splendour. A great number of greetings were bestowed upon the dear guests. 786

How joyfully the guests were welcomed! It seemed to them that Lady Kriemhilt had never given such a warm welcome to Lady Prünhilt when she arrived in Burgundy. Those who had never seen Kriemhilt before became acquainted with the great high spirits she evoked. 787

By now Sivrit, together with his vassals, had also arrived. They saw the heroes twisting and turning, backwards and forwards, in all corners of the plain, with their huge companies. No one could put a stop to the press of the crowds and the dust that arose there. 788

When the lord of the land saw Sivrit, and also Sigmunt, how affectionately he spoke up: 'A hearty welcome to you from me and all my allies! We rejoice that you have made this journey to our court!' 789

'Now God reward you!' said Sigmunt, ever desirous of honour. 'Ever since my son Sivrit won you for his ally, my mind has been intent on seeing you.'

King Gunther replied: 'This is a happy sight for me also!' 790

Sivrit was welcomed with the greatest honour, as well befitted him. No one there bore him ill-will. Giselher and Gernot gave their assistance, with great courtesy. I believe no guests were ever so graciously received. 791

Then the two kings' wives approached one another. Many saddles were emptied there, many a fair lady lifted down onto the grass by a hero's hands. How busy were those who delighted in waiting upon ladies! The lovely women then walked up to one another. Knights in 792 great numbers rejoiced that they greeted one another so prettily. Many warriors could be seen standing next to their damsels there. The noble 793 retinues took one another by the hand. There was much bowing out of courtesy to be seen there, and loving kisses on the part of well-favoured ladies. Gunther's and Sivrit's vassals were glad at that sight. 794

They waited there no longer, but rode up to the town. The host asked that his guests be shown clearly that they were glad to see them in Burgundy. Splendid jousts in great numbers took place before the
795 damsels. Hagen of Tronege, and also Ortwin, showed clearly what power they wielded. No one dared fail to carry out all they com-
796 manded. They rendered many services to the dear guests. There at the castle-gate many shields were heard to resound with the cut and thrust. The host and his guests halted in front of the gate for a long time before they rode in. The time passed quickly for them, so great
797 was their enjoyment.

Then they rode joyfully up to the splendid great hall. They saw lots of elegant phellel-silks, fine and well-cut, dangling from all the saddles
798 of the well-favoured ladies. Then Gunther's men arrived. They commanded that the guests be taken without delay to their chambers.

Prünhilt was seen to cast glances now and then at Lady Kriemhilt, who possessed ample beauty. Her complexion matched in its great
799 splendour the sheen of the gold.

All over the city of Worms the din of the retinue was to be heard. Gunther then asked Dancwart, his marshal, to see to them. He set
800 about finding good quarters for the folk. Both outside and inside the castle food was provided for them. Never were foreign guests better tended! All that they desired was at their disposal. The king was so
801 wealthy that no one was refused anything there. They served them amicably, with no hint of rancour. The host then sat down at table with his guests. Sivrit was asked to take a seat as he had done in former times.
802 Gallant men in great numbers then took their seats alongside him.

Some twelve hundred warriors sat at table in the circle there. Queen Prünhilt thought that no bondsman might ever be more powerful. She was still so well-disposed to him that she could let this
803 behaviour on his part pass by.

On that evening when the king was sitting there, many of the sumptuous garments were wetted with wine as the cupbearers approached the tables. Assiduous service was carried out to the full
804 there, as has long been the custom at festivities. Ladies and maidens were ordered to be given splendid quarters. No matter where they came from, the host bore them goodwill. They gave them all ample
805 and gracious hospitality.

When the night had ended and day broke, precious stones in great numbers were taken out of the trunks; they shone in the fine garments

as the ladies' hands touched them. Splendid dresses in great numbers were sought out. 806

Before day had fully broken many knights and squires came up to the hall. Then a great din arose again before an early mass, sung for the king. Young heroes rode such jousts there that the king thanked them for it. The sound of many trumpets rang out with a loud clamour. The din of drums and flutes grew so great that the whole wide city of Worms resounded loudly with it. The high-spirited heroes all mounted their chargers. Then there arose in that land a game played at very high stakes between many good warriors. There were lots to be seen there whose young hearts gave them high spirits. Fine, doughty knights in great numbers could be seen fighting behind their shields. 807 808 809

The proud women took their seats in the windows, together with many fair maidens—they were elegantly attired. They saw many a bold man indulging in his pastime. The host himself, with his allies, mounted his charger. 810

Thus they passed the time—it did not hang heavily for them. From over in the cathedral the sound of many bells could be heard. Then the palfreys arrived, and the ladies rode over to the minster. Many bold men followed the noble queens. 811

They alighted on the grass before the minster. Prünhilt was as yet still well inclined towards her guests. Wearing their crowns, they entered the spacious minster. Afterwards that affection of theirs ended—great enmity brought that about. 812

After they had heard mass, they left. Later they were to seen to walk joyfully to table, amid great hospitality. Their happiness never ceased at that festivity until the eleventh day dawned. 813

FOURTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW THE QUEENS SCOLDED ONE ANOTHER

BEFORE vespers much ado arose on the part of many warriors in the courtyard. They were practising chivalry, intent on amusing themselves. Men and women in great numbers ran over to watch. 814

The powerful queens were sitting together then. Their thoughts were bent upon two warriors, who were of great renown. Then fair

Kriemhilt said: 'I have a husband who might fittingly hold all these
815 kingdoms in his power.'

Lady Prünhilt replied: 'How might that be? If no one else were alive but he and you, then the kingdoms might well be subject to him.
816 For as long as Gunther lives, that could never be.'

Then Kriemhilt spoke again: 'See now, how he stands there! How splendidly he walks before the warriors, like the bright moon before
817 the stars! I have good reason to be in high spirits!'

Then Lady Prünhilt said: 'No matter how handsome your husband may be, how worthy and fair, yet you must give precedence over him to Gunther the warrior, your noble brother. He must take
818 precedence over all other kings, do not doubt it!'

Then Lady Kriemhilt said: 'My husband is of such high worth that it is not without reason that I have praised him. He stands in high honour
819 in so many respects. Believe me, Prünhilt, he's fully Gunther's equal.'

'Now, don't take it ill on my part, Kriemhilt, for I've not spoken without good reason. I heard them both say, when I saw them for
820 the very first time, and when the king had his will of me and won my love in such a knightly way—then Sivrit himself said he was the king's vassal, which is why I've held him to be a bondsman, ever since I heard him say so.'

821 Then fair Kriemhilt said: 'If that were so, I would have fared ill. How might my noble brothers have arranged that I should be a bondsman's wife? Therefore, Prünhilt, I ask you in all friendship, to
822 leave off such words, in all kindness.'

'I can't take my words back,' said the king's wife. 'Why should I relinquish so many knights who are bound in service to us together with that warrior?'

823 Beautiful Kriemhilt began to be very angry: 'You must give up any thought of his ever performing any service for you. He is higher in rank than Gunther, my brother, that most noble man. You must
824 spare me such words as I have heard from you. Indeed, it amazes me, since he is your bondsman and you hold such power over us both, that he has paid no dues to you for so long! I ought by rights to be
825 spared your arrogance!'

'You are getting above yourself!' said the king's wife. 'Now I would gladly see whether people honour you as highly as they do me.'

826 Both the ladies were by now in a very angry frame of mind. Then Lady Kriemhilt said: 'That must now be put to the proof.

Since you have claimed my husband for your bondsman, today the two kings' men must now see if I dare go to the minster ahead of the king's wife. You shall see today that I am a free noblewoman 827 and that my husband is higher in rank than yours. I do not want to be so insulted. You shall see before the night is out how your own bondswoman goes to court before the warriors in Burgundy. 828 I myself claim to be higher in rank than any queen known to have ever worn a crown.'

Then great enmity arose between the ladies. Prünhilt replied: 829 'If you won't admit you're my bondswoman, then you and your ladies must walk separately, not together with my retinue, when we go to the minster.'

Kriemhilt answered: 'In truth, that will be done! Dress yourselves 830 now, my maidens,' said Sivrit's wife. 'I will suffer no disgrace here. You must show clearly whether you have sumptuous clothing. Prünhilt will have good reason to take back her words.' 831

They needed no prompting to seek out sumptuous garments. Many ladies and maidens were most elegantly attired there. Then the noble king's wife walked forward with her retinue. Fair Kriemhilt herself was also well attired. She had with her forty-three maidens 832 whom she had brought to the Rhine; they wore bright phellel-silks wrought in Arabia. Thus the well-favoured maidens made their way to the minster. All Sivrit's men were waiting for them outside the hall. 833

People wondered how it had come about that the queens were thus seen to approach separately, not walking alongside one another as before. (Afterwards many a warrior was to pay very dearly for that.) 834

There before the minster stood Gunther's wife. Knights in great numbers were passing the time pleasantly with the fair ladies they saw there. Then Lady Kriemhilt came up with many splendid companies. All the clothes that noble knights' daughters had ever worn 835 before were as nothing compared with her retinue. She was so rich in possessions that thirty kings' wives could not show such wealth as Kriemhilt. Even if anyone wished to do so, he could not maintain that 836 such sumptuous garments were ever seen again as her well-favoured maidens wore on that occasion. Kriemhilt would not have behaved so except to spite Prünhilt. 837

They then arrived together outside the spacious minster. Maliciously, the lady of the house, out of great enmity, ordered

Kriemhilt to stop: 'No bondsman's wench shall ever walk ahead of
838 a king's wife.'

Then fair Kriemhilt said—she was in angry mood—'It would be better if you could hold your tongue now. You have put your fair person
839 to shame here. How might a vassal's whore ever become a king's wife?'

'Who are you calling a whore?' replied the king's wife.

'I mean you!' said Kriemhilt. 'It was Sivrit, my dearest husband, who first made love to your fair person. It wasn't my brother who
840 took your maidenhead from you! What were you thinking of? It was an evil trick. Why did you let him make love to you, since he is your bondsman? I hear you complain without any justification,' said Kriemhilt.

841 'Indeed,' replied Prünhilt, 'I will tell Gunther of this!'

'What does that matter to me? Your haughtiness has betrayed you. You claimed I am your subject. Rest assured that I will always resent
842 that. You will meet with no more intimate friendship from me!'

Prünhilt wept at that. Kriemhilt did not wait any longer. She walked into the minster then with her retinue, ahead of the king's wife. Great enmity arose there. (Bright eyes were to grow dim and
843 wet in consequence.)

No matter what service was rendered to God or what anyone sang there, it seemed to Prünhilt to take far too long, for she was greatly troubled in her mind. (Many a bold and worthy hero was to pay for
844 that in time to come.)

Prünhilt went out with her ladies and stood outside the minster. She thought: 'Kriemhilt must let me hear more of what she accuses me of so loudly—that shrewish* woman! If Sivrit has boasted of this,
845 it will cost him his life!'

Now noble Kriemhilt came out with many a bold warrior. Lady Prünhilt then said: 'Stop where you are a while! You called me a whore! You must give proof of that. Your words have caused me
846 grief, let me tell you!'

Lady Kriemhilt replied: 'You might as well let me pass. I can prove it by the gold I wear on my hand. My lover brought it to me when he first lay with you.'

847 Never did Prünhilt have a more miserable day in her life. She said: 'This most precious gold was stolen from me and has long been hidden from me, most maliciously. I'll find out for sure who took it from
848 me.' Both the ladies were outraged.

Then Kriemhilt spoke up again: 'I'll not be accused of having stolen it. You should have kept quiet about it, if honour were dear to you. I'll prove by the girdle I wear about me here that I'm not lying. My Sivrit was your lover!' 849

She was wearing the braid of silk from Nineveh with its precious stones—it was of ample quality. When Lady Prünhilt saw that, she began to weep. Gunther and all the Burgundians could not fail to hear about this. Then the queen said: 'Tell the Prince of the Rhineland to 850 come here. I want to let him hear how his sister has insulted me. She claims openly here that I am Sivrit's mistress!' 851

The king arrived with his warriors. He saw his beloved weeping there. How kindly he spoke to her! 'Tell me, dear lady, who has offended you?'

She said to the king: 'I have good reason to be unhappy. Your 852 sister would gladly part me from all my honour. Let me complain to you: she says that Sivrit, her husband, has made a whore of me!'

King Gunther replied: 'That would be an ill deed on her part.' 853

'She is wearing my girdle here, which I lost, and my red gold. I shall deeply regret that I was ever born, unless you, king, can defend me against this great disgrace. If so, I shall always be grateful to you.' 854

Then King Gunther said: 'Let him come forth. If he's boasted of this, he must admit it in public, or else the hero of the Netherlands must deny it.' They ordered that Kriemhilt's lover be brought at once. 855

When Lord Sivrit saw the agitated women—he knew nothing of the matter—how quick he was to speak! 'Why are these ladies weeping? I would gladly know the reason, or for what cause the king has sent for me.' 856

King Gunther replied: 'This causes me great distress. My lady Prünhilt has said here that you have boasted of being the first to make love to her fair person—so Kriemhilt, your wife, says!' 857

Then mighty Sivrit said: 'If she has said that, then it will cost her dear before I have done, and I will prove myself innocent to you of having said any such thing to her by the grave oaths I will swear before all your men.' 858

Then the King of the Rhineland said: 'You must give proof of that. If the oath which you offer can be given here, I will absolve you from all falseness.'

859 Then they bade the proud Burgundians stand in a circle.* Valiant Sivrit offered his hand to swear the oath, but then the mighty king said: 'Your entire innocence is so well known to me that I will
860 absolve you of having done that of which my sister accuses you.'

Sivrit then replied: 'If my wife were to get away with having caused Prünhilt dismay, that would grieve me beyond measure, rest assured.'

The two gallant, worthy knights exchanged glances with one
861 another then.

'Ladies should be brought up,' said Sir Sivrit, 'to refrain from insolent words. Forbid your wife to utter the like, and I will do the same to mine. I am truly ashamed of her most unbecoming
862 behaviour.'

Many of the fair women were no longer on speaking terms. Prünhilt was so sad that Gunther's men were bound to take pity
863 on her. Then Hagen of Tronege came walking up to his lady. Finding her in tears, he asked what troubled her. She told him what had happened. He vowed to her on the spot that Kriemhilt's
864 husband would pay for this, or he would never be happy about it. Ortwin and Gernot joined the discussion, as the heroes plotted Sivrit's death. Giselher, noble Uote's son, also came up to them.
865 When he heard what they were saying, he said in good faith: 'You most worthy warriors, why are you acting this way? Sivrit never merited such enmity that he should lose his life for such a cause.
866 Mere trifles, after all, make women angry.'

'Are we to breed bastards?'* replied Hagen. 'Such worthy warriors as we are would have little honour by that. I will die unless his boast
867 of his dealings with my dear lady costs him his life.'

Then the king himself said: 'He's brought us nothing but profit and honour. He must be allowed to live. What would it avail if I were now to be hostile to the warrior? He was always loyal to us and most
868 willing in our cause.'

Then Sir Ortwin of Metz said: 'Even his great strength cannot help him now. If my lord permits it, I'll do him harm.'

869 The heroes had declared hostilities against Sivrit without cause. No one would have pursued the matter, except that Hagen suggested again and again to Sir Gunther that if Sivrit were no longer alive, then many kings' lands would become subject to him. Gunther the
870 hero grew sorrowful at that.

Then they let the matter lie. Games were then to be seen there. Ah, what stout shafts were broken before the minster, before Sivrit's wife, all the way to the great hall! There was anger among plenty of Gunther's men. The king said: 'Let such murderous anger be! Sivrit 871
was born to bring us bliss and honour. Moreover, the wondrously valiant* man is so ferociously strong—if he learned of this, no one would dare oppose him!' 872

'No, that's not so,' replied Hagen. 'Keep your peace for now. I'm confident that in secret I can contrive that Prünhilt's weeping will cost him dear. Hagen will forever be his enemy now!' 873

Then King Gunther said: 'How might that be brought about?'

Hagen answered: 'I'll tell you. We'll have messengers whom no one knows here ride into our land, declaring hostilities openly. Then 874
you will announce before the guests that you and your men want to wage war. Once that is done, he'll vow to serve you in the cause—he'll lose his life by that. I'll find out information that will serve us from the bold warrior's wife.' 875

It was ill that the king took the advice of Hagen, his vassal. Those excellent knights began to contrive great disloyalty, before anyone could discover it. By the squabbling of two ladies, heroes in great numbers were doomed. 876

FIFTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT WAS BETRAYED

On the fourth morning after that, thirty-two men were seen to ride to court. Gunther, that powerful king, was then informed that hostilities had been declared against him. It was lies that caused ladies the greatest sorrow of all time. The messengers gained permission to 877
approach and said that they were Liudeger's men—those that Sivrit's hands had conquered before and brought as hostages into Gunther's land. Gunther greeted the messengers then and bade them be seated. 878
One amongst them said: 'Lord, let us stand until we have told the tidings that have been sent you. Indeed, many a mother's child bears you enmity, let us tell you. Liudegast and Liudeger, on whom in the 879
past you inflicted such grievous injury, declare hostilities against you. They want to ride into your land with their armies.'

880 The king grew angry when he heard those tidings. Then they told the traitors to go to their lodgings. How could Sir Sivrit—he or anyone else—defend himself against what they contrived there?
881 It was to bring the plotters themselves great grief in time to come. The king walked about plotting with his allies. Hagen of Tronege never left him in peace. Plenty of the king's men would have settled matters peacefully, but Hagen would never desist from what he
882 counselled.

One day Sivrit found them plotting. Then the hero of the Netherlands asked: 'How is it that the king and his men walk about in such sadness? I'll always help them avenge it if anyone has done them any
883 wrong.'

Lord Gunther replied: 'I have good reason to grieve. Liudegast and Liudeger have declared hostilities against me. They want to ride in open battle into my land.'

884 Then the bold warrior said: 'Sivrit's hands will take care to prevent that and maintain all your honour. I will act against those warriors as I did before: I will lay waste to their castles and their lands before
885 I have done with them—let my head be your pledge for that! You and your warriors must stay at home here and let me ride against them with the men I have at my disposal. I shall prove to you that I serve you willingly. Your enemies will suffer at my hands, rest
886 assured.'

'Happy am I to hear these tidings!' replied the king, as if he were genuinely glad of the aid Sivrit had promised. Falsely, the disloyal king made him a deep bow.

887 Then Lord Sivrit said: 'You have very little cause for anxiety.'

Then they sent the squires ahead on the journey.* That was put on as a show for Sivrit and his men. He ordered the men of the Netherlands to make ready then. Sivrit's warriors sought out warlike
888 garb.

Then mighty Sivrit said: 'My father Sigmunt, you must remain here. We will return to the Rhine in a short while, if God grants us good
889 fortune. You must stay here with the king and be of good cheer.'

They tied their banners to their spears, intent on setting off. There were plenty of Gunther's men present there who knew nothing of why this had happened. A great retinue could then be seen at
890 Sivrit's side. They tied their helmets and also their breastplates together, placing them on the palfreys. Strong knights in great

numbers made ready to leave the land. Then Hagen of Tronege went in search of Kriemhilt and asked to be given leave to depart—they were intent on leaving the land. 891

'Now happy am I', said Kriemhilt then, 'that I ever gained such a husband as dares stand so well at the head of my dear allies, as my lord Sivrit does before my friends! That puts me in high spirits,' said the queen. 'My dearest friend Hagen, remember that I will always 892 willingly serve you and never bore you enmity. Let my dear husband profit by that. He mustn't pay for it if I have done Prünhilt any wrong. I regretted it afterwards,' said the noble woman. 'Indeed he 893 has beaten me so badly for ever saying anything that troubled her mind. The bold and worthy hero has avenged that well.' 894

Hagen said: 'You'll be well reconciled in days to come. Kriemhilt, dear lady, you must tell me how I can serve your husband Sivrit. I will do so willingly, lady, for I wish no one better fortune.' 895

'I'd be entirely free of fear', said the noble woman, 'that anyone might take his life in battle, if only he would not let his pride have the better of him. Otherwise the bold and worthy warrior would always be safe.' 896

'Lady,' Hagen replied, 'if you have any idea about how he might be wounded, you must tell me what cunning I am to employ to prevent it. I will always ride and walk with him to guard him.' 897

She said: 'You are my kin, as I am yours. I commend my dear lover to you loyally, so that you may protect my husband.' She told him tidings known to her which would have been better left unsaid. 898 She said: 'My husband is bold, and great in strength, too. When he slew the dragon by the mountain, the gallant warrior bathed in its blood, which is why no weapon has ever wounded him in onslaughts. 899 Yet I am anxious when he does battle and many javelins are hurled by heroes' hands, that I may lose my dear husband. Oh, what great anxiety I often feel for Sivrit! I'll tell you about it, my dearest friend, 900 trusting in the loyalty you bear me. I'll let you hear where my dear husband can be wounded—I trust to your help in this. When the 901 hot blood flowed from the dragon's wounds and the bold, worthy knight bathed in it, a broad linden leaf fell and landed between his shoulder-blades. At that spot he can be wounded—that is the cause of my great anxiety.' 902

Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'Sew a small sign on his clothing. That way I will know where I can protect him when we stand in battle.'

She then thought she was protecting the hero—it was to be the
903 death of him. She said: 'With fine silk I shall sew a secret cross on his clothing. There, hero, your hands must protect my husband in the
904 thick of it, when he stands before his enemies in the onslaughts.'

'I'll do so, my dearest lady,' replied Hagen.

The lady did indeed imagine then that it would help Sivrit, but Kriemhilt's husband was betrayed by that. Hagen took his leave
905 then; he walked away in high spirits. The king's retinue were all in good spirits. I believe no warrior will ever again perpetrate such great treachery as Hagen did there, when Queen Kriemhilt entrusted her-
906 self to his loyalty.

The following morning, with a thousand of his men, Lord Sivrit rode off in high spirits. He thought to avenge the wrong done to his friends. Hagen rode so close to him that he could examine his
907 garments. When he saw the sign, he secretly sent off two of his men who brought fresh tidings: Gunther's land was to be left in peace, and
908 Liudeger had sent them to tell the king of this.

How unwillingly Sivrit then rode back, without having avenged any of the wrongs done to his friends! Only with great difficulty could Gunther's men persuade him to turn back. Then he rode up
909 to the king. The lord began to thank him: 'Now God reward you for your good intent, friend Sivrit. I must ever seek to repay you as I rightly ought, for doing so willingly what I ask of you. I have faith
910 in you above all my friends. Now that we have no cause to campaign, I want to ride to the Vosges Forest to hunt bears and boar, as I have often done before.' That had been the counsel of Hagen, that most
911 disloyal of men. 'Have all my guests told that we are riding off very early. Let those who wish to hunt with me make themselves ready.
912 Those who remain here to court the ladies do so with my blessing.'

Then Lord Sivrit said proudly: 'Whenever you ride hunting, I will gladly go with you. You must lend me a tracker and a bercelet* or
913 two, and I will ride into the woods.'

'Will you only take one tracker?' replied the king at once. 'If you like, I'll lend you four who are very well acquainted with the forest and the paths that the beasts take, and won't lead you astray when
914 you ride to camp.'

Then the gallant warrior rode to his wife. Hagen had quickly told the king how he would overcome the mettlesome knight. Never
915 should anyone practise such great disloyalty!

SIXTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT WAS SLAIN

GUNTHER and Hagen, those valiant warriors, proclaimed in their disloyalty a hunting expedition into the forest. With their sharp javelins they were intent upon hunting boars, bears, and bison—what could be bolder? Sivrit rode along with them, proud in demeanour. 916
Provisions of various kinds were taken along for them. By a cold spring Sivrit was afterwards to lose his life. That was the counsel of Prünhilt, King Gunther's wife. 917

The bold warrior then walked over to Kriemhilt. By now his fine hunting-clothes were packed on mules, both his and those of his companions. They wanted to cross the Rhine. Kriemhilt could never have been more unhappy than at that moment. Sivrit 918
kissed his beloved on the mouth. 'May God let me see you hale and hearty again, lady, and let your eyes see me again! You must pass the time pleasantly with your dear kinsmen—I cannot remain at home here.' 919

Then she reflected upon what she had told Hagen. She dared not tell Sivrit of it. The noble queen then lamented that she had ever been born. Lord Sivrit's wife wept beyond measure. She said to the 920
warrior: 'Let your hunting be. I dreamt last night, to my grief, how two wild boars chased you over the heath, and flowers grew red there. In all truth, I have good reason to weep so sorely! I am sorely afraid of 921
some conspiracy or other, if we have served any of them ill and they are capable of inflicting hostile intent upon us. Stay here, dear lord—that is my loyal counsel.' 922

Sivrit replied: 'My beloved, I'll be back in a few days. I know of no people here who bear me any enmity. All your kinsmen, with no exception, are well disposed towards me. Nor have I deserved anything less from the warriors here.' 923

'No, Lord Sivrit! Indeed I fear your fall! I dreamt last night, to my grief, how two mountains fell upon you—I never saw you again. If you want to part from me, it hurts me to the heart.' 924

He took his virtuous wife into his arms. Kissing her tenderly, he made love to her beautiful person. Taking his leave, he soon departed. (Sadly, she never saw him alive again.) 925

Then they rode off, deep into a forest, intent on amusement. Bold knights in great numbers followed Gunther and his men. Gernot
926 and Giselher had stayed back home. Many horses crossed the Rhine ahead of them, carrying bread and wine for the hunting party, meat and fish, and lots of other supplies such as so wealthy a king can read-
927 ily command.

The proud, bold huntsmen ordered that camp be set up on the edge of the greenwood, close to where the game would emerge, there where they were to hunt on a broad island. Sivrit had also arrived by now—
928 the king was told of this. The huntsmen then posted their relays* in all directions. Then that bold man, mighty Sivrit, said: 'Who is to direct
929 us in pursuit of the game in the forest, you bold and brave heroes?'

'Shall we separate before we start hunting here?' said Hagen then. 'That way we will be able to tell, I and my lords, who are the best
930 hunters on this expedition through the forest. We'll share out all the people and hounds. Then let everyone take whatever direction he wants. Whoever then hunts best shall have his thanks.' The hunters
931 did not stay together too long after those words.

Lord Sivrit then said: 'I have no need of hounds except for one bercelet, which has tasted its reward* so that it can follow the beasts' track through the wood. We'll have fine hunting!' said Kriemhilt's
932 husband.

Then an old huntsman brought over a good tracking-hound. It led its master in a short while to a place where they found lots of game. The party hunted down all the beasts that fled from their
933 lairs, as good hunters still do today. Valiant Sivrit, the hero of the Netherlands, slew with his hands all the beasts that the bercelet started up. His horse galloped so fast that none of them could escape
934 him. He won the prize above all others in the hunt.

He was well skilled in all these matters. The first beast that he killed with his hands was a sturdy, half-grown wild boar. Soon afterwards he
935 found a huge lion. When the bercelet started up the lion, Sivrit shot it with his bow, to which he had fitted a sharp arrow. After being hit the lion ran no more than three leaps. Sivrit's fellow-huntsmen thanked
936 him for his efforts. Soon thereafter he killed a bison and an elk, four mighty aurochses, and a fierce buck. His horse bore him so swiftly that
937 nothing escaped him.Whether harts or hinds, little could evade him.

The tracking-hound found a huge boar. When it started to flee, the master of that hunt at once arrived and stood in its path. Wild with

anger, the boar charged at the bold hero. Kriemhilt's husband then 938
slew it with his sword. No other hunter could have done it so easily.
When he had felled it, they tied up the tracking hound. It was then
that the hunter's rich bounty was revealed to the Burgundians. His 939
huntsmen then said: 'If it's convenient, Sir Sivrit, spare us some share
of the game. Otherwise you'll clear out the whole mountain and the
forest, too, today!' That caused the valiant, bold warrior to smile. 940

Then they heard a great noise and din everywhere. The clamour roused by the people and the hounds grew so great that the mountain and also the forest echoed with it. The huntsmen had released twenty-four packs of running-hounds. Many of the beasts had to forfeit their 941
lives there and then. Those hunters thought they might contrive to
have the hunting prize given to them. That could not come to pass,
not when mighty Sivrit was seen by the campfire. 942

The hunt was over, but not yet entirely. Those who headed for the campfire brought along with them the skins of animals in great numbers, and game in plenty. Ah, how much was carried to the kitchen by the king's household! 943

Then the king had it proclaimed to those renowned huntsmen that he wanted to dine. Loudly one note on a horn was blown, announcing to them that the noble prince was to be found in the encampment there. 944

One of Sivrit's hunters then said: 'Lord, I have heard by the blow of a horn that we must now go to the encampment. I'll give them an answer.' Then many horns were heard blowing to summon their companions. 945

Lord Sivrit then said: 'Let us leave the woods now, too!'

His horse carried him at an even pace. They hurried off alongside him. By their clamour they started up a ferocious beast, a wild bear. The warrior then said to those behind him: 'I'll give our companions 946
good pastime! Let the bercelet loose! I can see a bear, which will make
its way with us to the camp. Unless it flees with great haste, it can't
possibly save itself!' 947

The bercelet was released—the bear leapt away. Kriemhilt's husband was intent on riding it down; it came into a fell, and so it could not be. The mighty beast then thought itself safe from the huntsman. Then that proud, worthy knight leapt down from his horse. 948
He chased it on foot. The bear was off its guard—it could not escape
him. He captured it on the spot. Without sustaining any wounds at
all, the hero swiftly tied it up. It could not scratch or bite the man. 949
He tied it to his saddle. The bold warrior mounted at once. He took

the bear to the fireside. The bold and doughty warrior thought in his
950 high spirits that this was a joke!

With what great splendour he rode to the camp! His javelin was sturdy, strong, and broad. An elegant sword reached down to his
951 spurs. The lord carried a splendid horn of rich red gold. Never did I hear tell of better hunting-garb. He was seen to wear a tunic of black phellel-silk and a hat of sable, which was of ample cost. Ah, what rich
952 braids he bore on his quiver! A panther's skin was stretched over it for the sake of its sweet scent.* He also carried a bow with him, which would have had to be drawn by an engine,* if he'd not spanned it
953 himself. All his clothing was of otter skin,* varied by furs of other kinds from top to tail. Bars of gold in great numbers shone forth from both sides of the bright furs that the bold master-huntsman
954 wore. At that time he also carried Balmunc, an elegant broadsword, which was so sharp that it never missed its mark when it struck upon a helmet—its edges were of fine quality. That splendid hunter was in
955 high spirits. Since I must tell you the whole tale: his noble quiver was full of excellent arrows with gold mounts and heads of a good hand's
956 breadth. All that he pierced with those would die a quick death.

The noble knight rode along in fine huntsmanlike fashion. Gunther's men saw him approaching them; they ran towards him to take his horse for him. By its saddle he then led a huge and mighty
957 bear. When he had dismounted, he untied the bonds around the bear's paws and mouth. At once the pack barked loudly, all the hounds that saw the bear. The beast wanted to head off into the forest—the
958 people were in turmoil! Startled by the clamour, the bear headed through the kitchen. Oh, how many kitchen-drudges it parted from their fire! Many cauldrons were upset, many brands scattered.
959 Oh, what fine food was found lying in the ashes!

At that the lords and their vassals leapt up from their seats. The bear was getting angry. The king then gave order that all the hounds that lay leashed up there be released. If things turned out well,
960 they would have had a happy day's hunting! With their bows and hunting-spears, delaying no longer, the bold huntsmen ran after the bear. There were so many hounds about them that no one shot there.
961 All the mountain resounded with the people's clamour.

The bear then fled ahead of the hounds. None could keep up with it except Kriemhilt's husband. He caught up with it and then slew it
962 with his sword. After that they carried the bear back to the fireside.

Those who saw that said that he was a man of great strength. They bade the proud hunting company go to the tables. They sat there in ample numbers on a fair meadow. Oh, what fine food was brought to the noble hunters then! 963

The cup-bearers took their time about bringing the wine. Never could heroes be better served, were it not that they had such treachery in mind—that apart, those warriors were free of all disgrace. 964

Then Lord Sivrit said: 'I wonder, since they bring us such plenty from the kitchen, why the cup-bearers do not bring us the wine. Unless the hunters are better catered for, I have no wish to be one of this hunting party. I, for my part, might have merited better service.' 965

The king spoke falsely from his table: 'We will gladly make it up to you for this shortage. It is Hagen who is to blame—he would willingly have us die of thirst!' 966

Hagen of Tronege then said: 'My dearest lord, I thought that today's hunting was to be over in the Spessart. I sent the wine there. If our thirst is not sated today, I'll take care it never happens again!' 967

Then Lord Sivrit said: 'A curse upon them! They should have brought me seven packloads of mead and clary. If that were not possible they ought to have set up camp for us nearer the Rhine.' 968

Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'You noble, bold knights, I know of a cold spring near here. Do not be angry! Let us go there.' (That counsel was to bring great sorrow to many a warrior.) 969

Sivrit the warrior was sore pressed by thirst. He ordered the table to be taken away all the earlier. He wanted to go past the mountains to the spring. The warriors had agreed on that counsel with treachery in mind. They ordered that the beasts which Sivrit's hands had slain 970 there be loaded on waggons and taken to Burgundy. All who saw that praised him greatly.

Hagen broke faith with Sivrit most grievously. As they were about 971 to set off for the wide-branching linden, Hagen of Tronege said: 'I have often been told that no one can outrun Kriemhilt's husband if he is in haste. Oh, if only he would let us see that!' 972

Bold Sivrit of the Netherlands replied: 'You can readily try it for yourself, if you will race me to the spring. When the race is over, he who is seen to be the winner shall be accorded victory.' 973

'Let's put it to the test now,' said Hagen the warrior.

Then bold Sivrit said: 'In that case, I will lie down in the grass at your feet.' When he heard that, how glad Gunther was! The bold 974

warrior went on: 'I'll tell you yet more: I'll carry all my garments with me, my javelin and shield, and all my hunting-gear.' He quickly
975 bound about him the quiver and the sword.

Then they took off their clothes. They were seen standing there in two white shifts. Like two wild panthers they ran through the clover.
976 Bold Sivrit was seen at the spring first. He excelled many men in all things. Quickly he took off his sword; he laid his quiver to one side; he leant the stout javelin against a branch of the linden.
977 The noble foreigner stood by the flowing spring. Sivrit's courtesy was very great. He laid his shield down where the spring flowed. No matter how thirsty he was, the hero did not drink at all before the
978 king had drunk. Gunther repaid him very ill for that.

The spring was cool, clear, and fine. Then Gunther bent low, down to the stream. When he had drunk, he rose up and turned
979 away. Bold Sivrit would gladly have done the same. Then he paid for his good breeding. Hagen took both his bow and his sword away from him. Then Hagen leapt back to where he found the javelin.
980 He looked for an image on the bold warrior's garment. As Lord Sivrit drank at the spring, Hagen speared him through the cross, so that from his wound the blood spurted from his heart, all over
981 Hagen's clothes. Never again will a hero commit so gross a crime!

Hagen left the javelin sticking there, close by Sivrit's heart. Never did Hagen flee so wildly, nor run away from any man in the world. When Lord Sivrit realized how grievously he was
982 wounded, he leapt away from the spring in a rage. The long javelin protruded from his heart. The prince looked for his bow or sword—
983 if he found them, then Hagen would be rewarded for his service! When the grievously wounded man could not find his sword, he had nothing left then but his shield's rim. He snatched it up from the spring—he ran at Hagen. King Gunther's vassal could not
984 escape him then. Mortally wounded though he was, Sivrit struck such a powerful blow that many of the precious stones flew up from the shield—the shield broke into pieces! The noble guest would
985 dearly love to have avenged himself. Hagen stumbled under the force of Sivrit's hands. The island echoed loudly with the power of his blow. If he had had his sword in his hands, it would have been the death of Hagen. The wounded man was in such a rage, as
986 he had every right to be. He had turned pale—he couldn't stand. All his bodily strength departed from him, for, despite the glow of

his complexion, he bore death's mark. Afterwards he was wept over by ample numbers of fair ladies. 987

Then Kriemhilt's husband fell into the flowers. The blood from his wound flowed freely, as could clearly be seen. Then he began to curse those who had conspired so disloyally to bring about his death—he had every right to do so. The mortally wounded war- 988
rior then said: 'Well, you evil cowards, what help have my services been, now that you have slain me? I was always loyal to you. I have paid for that now. You have wrought ill by your kinsmen, sad as it is to say. All those who are born after these times will be accursed 989
because of this.* You have avenged your wrath all too evilly upon me. This disgrace must cut you off from the company of good warriors.' 990

The knights all ran over to where he lay slain. For plenty of them it was a joyless day. Those who were at all loyal lamented his passing. That bold and gallant knight had well deserved it. 991

The King of Burgundy lamented his death. Then the mortally wounded warrior said: 'There is no need for that—a man who weeps over a wrong he has done merits much cursing. It would have been better left undone.' 992

Then fierce Hagen said: 'I don't know why you're grieving. All our troubles and our sorrow are at an end now. We will find very few who dare oppose us. Happy am I that I've rid us of his power!' 993

'It is easy for you to make such a boast,' replied Sivrit. 'If I'd known you to have such a murderous intent, I could easily have protected myself against you. I grieve for no one so much as for Lady Kriemhilt, my wife. Now may God take pity that I ever gained a 994
son who must be reproached hereafter because his kinsmen have slain someone so murderously. If only I could,' Sivrit said, 'I would justly lament over this.' Then the mortally wounded man said, most 995
pitifully: 'If, noble king, you wish to act with some loyalty towards anyone in this world, let my dearly beloved be commended to your mercy, and let her profit by being your sister. In the name of all 996
princes' courtesy, treat her loyally. My father and my men must wait long for my return. Never was a lady's dear husband treated worse.' 997

The flowers all about grew wet with blood. Sivrit struggled against death then. It did not last long, for death's sword has always cut too hard. That bold and gallant warrior could then speak no more. When the lords saw that the hero was dead, they laid him upon 998
a shield, which was of red gold, and took counsel as to how it might

happen that they could conceal that this was Hagen's work. Plenty of them then said: 'Ill has befallen us. You must all conceal it and say with one accord that he rode out hunting alone, Kriemhilt's husband, and was slain by ambushers as he rode through the forest.'

Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'I'll take him back to Burgundy. I care very little if she who has so troubled Prünhilt's mind comes to know of it. It matters very little to me, no matter how much she weeps.'

SEVENTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIVRIT WAS MOURNED OVER AND BURIED

THEN they waited for night to fall and crossed the Rhine. No heroes could ever have hunted worse. Noble children wept over one beast that they had slain. (Many worthy fighters were to pay the price for that in time to come.) You may hear tell of great arrogance and dreadful vengeance! Hagen then ordered that Sivrit of the land of the Nibelungs, dead as he was, be carried and laid down outside the chamber in which Kriemhilt was to be found. He ordered that they lay him secretly against the door, so that she should find him there when she came out to go to matins, before day broke—a service which Lady Kriemhilt very seldom slept through.

As was the custom there, they rang bells to summon people to the minster. Fair Lady Kriemhilt wakened many a maiden. She asked that a light be brought for her, and also her clothes. Then a chamberlain came and found Sivrit lying there. He saw him red with blood, his clothes all wet. He had no idea that it was his lord. He took the candle in his hand and went into the chamber. From him Lady Kriemhilt learned most evil tidings. As she was about to go to the minster with her ladies, the chamberlain said: 'Stay where you are! A knight lies slain outside this chamber!' At that Kriemhilt took to weeping beyond all measure. Even before she found out for certain that it was her husband, she began to think of Hagen's question about how he should protect him. Then anguish first befell her. With his death she had declared war on all joys. She sank to the ground then, not speaking a word. They saw the fair queen lying there, bereft of joy. Kriemhilt's grief grew great beyond measure. She fainted—on awakening she then screamed so loud that the whole chamber resounded.

The household then said: 'What if it is a stranger?' The blood burst forth from her mouth, so great was her heart's grief. Then she said: 'It is Sivrit, my dearest husband. Prünhilt has conspired to have Hagen do this deed.' 1010

The lady had herself led to where she found the hero. With her white hands she raised his handsome head. Although it was red with blood, she was quick to recognize him. The hero from the land of the Nibelungs lay there in a most wretched state. Then the bountiful 1011 queen cried out in great sadness: 'Alas for the evil that has befallen me! For your shield has not been hewn to pieces by swords—you lie here murdered! If I knew who had done it, I would forever seek to bring about his death!' 1012

All her retinue lamented and cried out along with their dear lady, for they felt great grief for their most noble lord, whom they had lost there. Hagen had grievously avenged Prünhilt's wrath. Then the 1013 wretched queen said: 'You chamberlains must go and wake Sivrit's men at once. You must also tell Sigmunt of my grief, and ask if he will help me mourn bold Sivrit.' 1014

Then a messenger ran quickly to where he found them lying—Sivrit's heroes from the land of the Nibelungs. With his wretched tidings he robbed them of their joy. They didn't want to believe it, until they heard the weeping. The messenger also quickly went to where the 1015 king, Lord Sigmunt, lay, not sleeping. I believe his heart had told him what had happened to him. Never again could he see his dear son alive. 1016 'Wake, Lord Sigmunt! My Lady Kriemhilt asked me to go in search of you. Such a wrong has been done her as touches her heart above all other sorrows. You must help her mourn, for it touches you deeply.' 1017

Sigmunt rose to his feet. He said: 'What are these sorrows of fair Kriemhilt you tell me about?'

The messenger replied, weeping: 'I can't keep it from you: bold Sivrit of the Netherlands has been slain.' 1018

Lord Sigmunt then said: 'Let your tomfoolery be, if you would spare me! Speak no such evil tidings, telling people that he is slain, for I could never cease to mourn over him until the day I die.' 1019

'If you will not believe what you hear me say, then you yourself can hear Kriemhilt and all her retinue mourning over Sivrit's death.'

Sigmunt was greatly shocked at that, as he had good reason to be. 1020 He leapt from his bed, as did a hundred of his men. They reached for their long, sharp swords and ran, full of grief, to where they heard the

1021 cries of lament. A thousand warriors then came up, bold Sivrit's men. When they heard the ladies lamenting so wretchedly, some amongst them there then thought that they should put on their court clothes.* They had lost their senses out of sorrow. Great grief lay buried deep
1022 in their hearts.

Then King Sigmunt went to where he found Kriemhilt. He said: 'Alas for our journey into this land! Who has so murderously robbed me
1023 of my son, and you of your husband, among such good friends?'

'Oh, if I were to know who did it,' said the most noble queen, 'he would never find favour in my heart! I would cause him such harm as
1024 would make his friends weep because of me!'

Lord Sigmunt took the prince in his arms. Then the grief of his friends grew so great that the loud cries of lament caused the palace and great hall, and even the town of Worms, to resound with their
1025 weeping. No one could then console Sivrit's wife. They drew the clothes off his handsome body. They washed his wounds and laid him
1026 on the bier. His people were stricken with great grief then.

Then Sivrit's warriors from the land of the Nibelungs said: 'Our hands shall always seek to avenge him. He who has done this
1027 must be in this castle.' All Sivrit's men then ran for their swords. Those excellent knights came up with their shields, eleven hundred warriors—those Lord Sigmunt had in his company. He would gladly
1028 have avenged his son's death, as he had good reason to do. They didn't know whom they should attack in battle then, unless it were Gunther and his men, with whom Lord Sivrit had ridden to the hunt. Kriemhilt
1029 saw them armed, which grieved her greatly. No matter how great was her sorrow and how deep her anguish, she was so sorely afraid that the Nibelungs would die at the hands of her brother's men that she
1030 forestalled it. She warned them kindly, as friends do dear friends.

The lady rich in sorrow said then: 'My lord Sigmunt, what are you about? You are not aware that King Gunther has so many bold men here. You would all lose your lives if you were to attack those
1031 warriors!'

Their helmets buckled on,* they were ready for the fray. The noble queen pleaded and commanded that the gallant warriors should refrain. When they would not abandon their purpose, it truly grieved
1032 her. She said: 'Lord Sigmunt, you must put this off until a more fitting time—then I will always be willing, along with you, to avenge my husband. If I am informed who has taken him from me, I will be

sure to cause him harm. There are many haughty men here by the 1033
Rhine, which is why I will not advise you to do battle. They have a
good thirty men for every one of ours. Now God grant that they fare
as they have deserved by us! You must stay here and suffer these 1034
sorrows with me. When dawn begins to break, you most gallant
heroes, help me put my dear husband into his coffin.'

Then the knights said: 'That shall be done.' 1035

No one could tell you in full the marvel of how the knights and ladies were heard to mourn, so that the people in the city came to hear the cries of lament. The noble townsmen came hurrying up to the castle. They mourned along with the strangers, for they were heartily 1036
sorry. No one had told them anything of Sivrit's guilt, nor why the noble warrior should have lost his life. The good townsmen's wives wept together with the ladies. 1037

Smiths were ordered to make haste to fashion a coffin of silver and of gold, great in size and sturdy. They ordered it to be bound firmly with bars of good steel. All the people were very sad at heart. 1038
The night had passed. Dawn was about to come, they said. Then the noble lady ordered that Lord Sivrit, her dearest husband, be borne to the minster. All the friends he had there were seen to weep as they walked. When they took him to the minster, many bells rang out. On 1039
all sides the song of priests in great numbers was then to be heard. Then King Gunther with his men, and also grim Hagen, came to the lament. 1040

Gunther said: 'Dearest sister, alas for your sorrows, and that we should have to suffer such a great loss! We must forever mourn Sivrit.'

'You have no right to do so,' said the wretched queen. 'If you were 1041
sorry for it, then it wouldn't have happened! You had forgotten about me, I now aver, when I and my dear husband were parted. Would God', said Kriemhilt, 'that I myself had been killed!' 1042

They denied it firmly. Kriemhilt declared: 'Let he who is innocent have it be beheld! Let him approach the bier before all the people! The truth will soon be shown then.' 1043

This is a great marvel—it still happens many a time today. Whenever a marked murderer* is seen alongside a dead man, then the corpse's wounds will bleed—as also happened there.* Thus Hagen's guilt was beheld there. The wounds flowed as freely as they had done before. 1044
The numbers of those who had mourned there before grew even greater now.

Then King Gunther said: 'I tell you the truth of the matter—it
1045 was ambushers who slew him. It was not Hagen who did this!'

'The ambushers', said Kriemhilt, 'are very well known to me. Now may God have Sivrit's allies' hands avenge it yet! Gunther and Hagen, it was you who did this!'

1046 At that Sivrit's warriors were bent on doing battle. Yet Kriemhilt spoke again: 'Bear this anguish with me now.'

Then Gernot, her brother, and young Giselher both came up to where they found Sivrit dead. In loyalty they mourned him, along
1047 with the others. They wept fervently over Kriemhilt's husband. Mass was to be sung. All alike walked over to the minster, women, men, and children. Even those who were glad to be rid of him wept
1048 over Sivrit then.

Gernot and Giselher said: 'Sister mine, console yourself now after this death, as it cannot be otherwise. We will make amends to you for this as long as we live.'

1049 Yet no one in this world could give her any consolation then.

His coffin had been made ready about midday. They lifted him up from the bier on which he lay. The lady did not wish to have
1050 him buried yet. All the people were in great distress over this. They wound a rich phellel-silk about the corpse. I believe there was no one to be found there who was without tears. Uote, noble woman that she was, mourned from her heart, as did all her
1051 retinue, over his handsome person. When it was heard that they were singing at the minster and that he had been put in his coffin, a great throng arose. What offerings were then brought forth for the sake of his soul! Despite his enemies he had good friends in plenty
1052 there.

Wretched Kriemhilt said to her chamberlains: 'For my sake, let those suffer hardship* who wish him well at all and to whom I am
1053 dear. For the sake of Sivrit's soul have his gold be shared out.'

There was no child so small there with its wits about it who did not go to the offering. Before he was buried more than a hundred masses had been sung there that day. There was a great throng of Sivrit's
1054 friends there. After the singing was over, the people departed. Then Lady Kriemhilt said: 'You mustn't leave me to watch alone over the
1055 excellent warrior tonight. All my joy has been cast down by his death. I will leave him where he is for three days and three nights, until my grief for my dearest husband is sated. What if God orders that

Death takes me also? Then my anguish, wretched Kriemhilt that I am, would be well ended.' 1056

The townsfolk went to their lodgings. She asked the priests and monks, and all of Sivrit's retinue, to stay and watch over the hero. They had many hard nights and many harsh days. Many a man remained 1057 there, not eating nor drinking. Those who wished for food and drink were told that they would be given it in full. Lord Sigmunt saw to that. The Nibelungs grew acquainted with great hardship then. 1058 During those three days, so we hear tell, those there who could sing had to bear much hardship. What offerings were brought to them! Those who were very poor became rich enough. 1059

Such poor people as were found who could not afford it were told to go to make offerings with the gold from Sivrit's own treasury. As he was to live no longer, many thousand marks were given for the sake of his soul. Kriemhilt shared out the revenue from taxes 1060 all over the lands, wherever monasteries and good people were to be found. Silver and clothing in plenty were given to the poor. She thus showed what goodwill she bore Sivrit. On the third morning, 1061 at the right time for mass, the broad churchyard next to the minster was full with the weeping countryfolk. They rendered him such service after his death as ought to be paid to dear friends. 1062 In those four days, so it has been said, thirty thousand marks or even more was given to the poor there for the sake of his soul. Thus his great beauty and his life were laid low. When God had been served 1063 there and the singing was over, many of the people wrestled with distress beyond measure. They ordered that he be carried out of the minster to the grave. Those who were loath to part with him were seen to weep and lament. Loud were the cries of the people as they 1064 walked alongside the corpse. No one was joyful there, neither women nor men. Before he was buried, there was singing and reading. Ah, what good priests were at his burial! 1065

Before Sivrit's wife came to the grave, the loyal queen struggled with such wretchedness that she had to have water from the well poured over her there, time and again. Her spirits were low beyond measure. It was a great marvel that she ever survived. Many a lady 1066 helped her to mourn.

Then the queen said: 'You men of Sivrit, by your loyalty, have mercy on me! Let me, after this my sorrow, have this small pleasure: 1067 let me see his handsome head once more!'

She pleaded for this so long in her mind's great grief that they then
1068 had to break open the splendid coffin. Then they took the lady to where she found him lying. She lifted up his handsome head with her white hands. Then she kissed the noble, worthy knight, dead though he was.
1069 Out of sheer sorrow her lustrous eyes wept blood.

Wretched was the parting that then took place there. They carried her away—she could not walk. She was then found senseless, that
1070 noble queen. That most beautiful lady might have died of sorrow.

Now that they had buried the noble lord, all those who had come with him from the land of the Nibelungs were seen to grieve beyond
1071 measure. Seldom was Sigmunt found in good spirits then. There were several then who out of great grief neither ate nor drank for three days. Yet they could not so entirely renounce their bodily needs. After their
1072 sorrows they recovered, as plenty still do today.

EIGHTEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIGMUNT RETURNED TO HIS HOMELAND

Kriemhilt's father-in-law went to see her. He said to the queen: 'We must go back to our land. We're unwelcome guests, I believe, by
1073 the Rhine. Kriemhilt, dearest lady, come now to my lands. Though treachery has robbed us of your noble husband here in these lands, you must not pay the price for that. I will hold you dear for love of
1074 my son—be in no doubt of that. Moreover, lady, you shall keep all the power which Sivrit, that bold warrior, made known to you before. Let both the land and the crown be subject to you. All Sivrit's men
1075 shall willingly serve you.'

Then they told the squires that they were to ride off. With great haste they made for the horses then. It irked them to stay amid their fierce
1076 foes. They ordered the clothes for the ladies and maidens to be sought.

Now that King Sigmunt was intent on riding off, Kriemhilt's kinsfolk began to plead with her that she should stay there with her
1077 mother. The proud lady replied: 'That could never be. How might I ever behold with my eyes that man by whom such great grief has befallen me, wretched woman that I am?'

Young Giselher then said: 'My dearest sister, you must in your
1078 loyalty stay here with your mother. As for those who have troubled

and grieved your mind, you've no need of their service. Live now at my expense alone.'

She said to the warrior: 'Indeed, that cannot happen. I would have to die of grief if I ever had to see Hagen.' 1079

'I shall spare you that, my dearest sister. You must stay with your brother Giselher. Indeed, I will make amends to you for your husband's death.'

The God-forsaken queen replied: 'Kriemhilt would stand in dire need of that.' 1080

Now that young Giselher had made her such a kind offer, Uote and Gernot and her loyal kinsmen began to plead with her. They besought her to stay there. She had few kinsfolk among Sivrit's men. 'They are all strangers to you,' said Gernot. 'No one alive is 1081 so strong but he must die some day. Think on this, dear sister, and console yourself. Stay among your friends. It will truly be best for you.' 1082

She vowed to Giselher that she would remain there. The horses had been led up for Sigmunt's men, now that they were intent on riding to the land of the Nibelungs, and all the warriors' garments had also been loaded onto the packhorses. Lord Sigmunt then walked 1083 over to where Kriemhilt stood. He said to the lady: 'Sivrit's men are waiting for you by the horses. Let us ride now, for I am most unwilling to stay among the Burgundians.' 1084

Lady Kriemhilt replied: 'My friends, all that I have who are loyal, counsel me to stay with them here. I have no kinsfolk in the land of the Nibelungs.'

It grieved Sigmunt greatly to hear this from Kriemhilt. King 1085 Sigmunt then said: 'Let no one tell you that. You shall wear the crown and rule over all my kinsmen as powerfully as you did before. You shall not pay the price for our having lost the hero. For the 1086 sake of your baby, also, come back with us. You must not let it be an orphan, lady. When your son is fully grown he will console you. Meanwhile many a bold and worthy hero will be in your service.' 1087

She said: 'Lord Sigmunt, indeed I cannot ride with you. No matter what happens to me, I must remain here among my kinsfolk, who will help me grieve.'

These tidings brought no pleasure then to the worthy warriors. 1088 They all said with one voice: 'In that case, we might justly say that only now has suffering befallen us. If you were to want to stay among

our foes here, then never did heroes ride with greater anxiety away
1089 from a foreign court.'

'You shall depart without anxiety, commended to God's keeping. They will give you a good escort to Sigmunt's land—I'll order that you be well protected. Let my dear baby be well commended to the
1090 favour of you warriors.'

When they heard for certain that she did not want to leave, all Sigmunt's men wept as one. How wretchedly Sigmunt then parted
1091 from Lady Kriemhilt. Anger then made his acquaintance.

'A curse upon this festivity!' said the proud king then. 'Never again will a king and his kinsmen, bent on pleasure, suffer what has
1092 befallen us! Never again will they see us here in Burgundy!'

Then Sivrit's men said openly: 'The journey might yet be made into this land, when we have found out for certain who slew our lord.
1093 They will find plenty of fierce foes among his kinsfolk.'

Sigmunt kissed Kriemhilt. When he saw for certain that she wanted to remain, how wretchedly he spoke: 'Now let us ride without joy, home to our land. Only now are all my sorrows known
1094 to me.'

They rode away from Worms on the Rhine without any escort. They must have been fully confident in their minds that if they were attacked by foes, the bold Nibelungs' hands would defend
1095 themselves. They asked leave of no man there. Then Gernot and Giselher were seen to go up to Sigmunt in friendship. They grieved
1096 over his loss. Those bold and gallant heroes assured him of that. Courteously Prince Gernot then said: 'God in Heaven knows well that I was never guilty of Sivrit's murder, nor did I ever hear tell who might be hostile to him here. I have every right to mourn
1097 over him.'

Then young Giselher gave them good escort. He took pains that the king and his warriors be brought out of that land afterwards and home to the Netherlands. How few of their kinsmen were found to
1098 rejoice there! How they then fared I cannot tell.

Here in Burgundy Kriemhilt was heard to lament at all times, and no one comforted her heart and mind, unless it were Giselher, who
1099 was loyal and worthy. Fair Prünhilt resided there in arrogance. She cared little for all the tears that Kriemhilt shed. Never again was she ready to show her true kindness. In time to come Lady Kriemhilt
1100 would, for her part, cause her most heartfelt suffering.

NINETEENTH ADVENTURE

HOW THE HOARD OF THE NIBELUNGS WAS BROUGHT TO WORMS

WHEN noble Kriemhilt was thus widowed, Count Eckewart remained with her in Burgundy, along with his men. He was at her service every day. He often helped his lady to lament over his lord. 1101
A closed chamber was built for her in Worms near the minster, broad, great in size, and costly, where she would then sit with her retinue, devoid of happiness. She went gladly to church, and did so with a good will. How seldom she failed to go at all times, sad at heart, 1102
to where her beloved lay buried! She besought gracious God to tend his soul. Time and again she wept over the knight in great loyalty. 1103

Uote and her retinue comforted her at all times. Yet her heart was so grievously wounded that all the comfort they offered her could be of no avail. The anguish she felt for her dearly beloved was the greatest 1104
any woman ever felt for her dear husband. Her great virtue could clearly be perceived by this. She mourned until her end, for as long as her life lasted. (In time to come bold Sivrit's wife was to avenge herself with courage.) 1105

Thus she resided there after the grief that had befallen her—this is nothing but the truth I tell you—for some three-and-a-half years after her husband's death, never speaking a single word to Gunther, nor ever beholding her foe Hagen in all that time. 1106

Then the hero of Tronege said: 'If you could contrive that your sister might be on friendly terms with you, then Nibelunc's gold might come to these lands. You might gain much of that if we were in the queen's favour.' 1107

Gunther said: 'Let's make the attempt. My brothers are often with her. We'll ask them to try to bring about friendly relations with her, and see if we can win her consent.'

'I doubt', said Hagen, 'if that'll ever happen.' 1108

Then Gunther bade Ortwin come to court, and Margrave Gere. When that was done, they also sent for Gernot and young Giselher. After that they tried a friendly approach to Lady Kriemhilt. Bold 1109
Gernot of Burgundy then said: 'Lady, you lament Sivrit's death

too long. The king wants to testify to you publicly that he did not slay
1110 him. People hear you lamenting so very grievously at all times.'

She said: 'No one accuses him of it. It was Hagen's hand that slew him. When he found out from me where he might be wounded, how was I to believe that he bore him enmity? I would have been on my
1111 guard', said the queen, 'against giving him away!* Then I could now abandon my weeping, most wretched woman that I am. Those who did that deed will never find favour with me.' Then Giselher, that
1112 most gallant warrior, began to plead with her.

'I will greet the king.'

When she had conceded that to Giselher, they saw Gunther come before her with his best allies. Hagen did not then dare go before her. He was well aware of his guilt and the suffering he had caused
1113 her. When she decided to abandon her enmity towards Gunther, it would have better befitted him—if he were to kiss her*—if the wrong to her had not been done by his counsel. Then he might have approached
1114 Kriemhilt without trepidation. No reconciliation among friends was ever accompanied by so many tears. Her loss hurt her sorely. She renounced her enmity to all of them, except for one man. No one would
1115 have slain Sivrit if Hagen had not done so. Not very long after that they arranged that Lady Kriemhilt should acquire the great hoard from the land of the Nibelungs, and it was taken to the Rhine. It was her dow-
1116 ry and was rightly hers. Giselher and Gernot then went to fetch the hoard. Kriemhilt ordered eight thousand men to fetch it from where it
1117 lay hidden, where Sir Albrich guarded it along with his best allies.

When they saw the men from the Rhine come for the treasure, valiant Albrich said to his allies: 'We dare not keep the hoard from
1118 her, since the noble queen claims it as her dowry. Yet this would never have been done', said Albrich, 'if we had not, to our misfortune, lost, along with Sivrit, the good cloak of invisibility, for fair Kriemhilt's
1119 beloved bore that with him at all times. Now, sadly, Sivrit has met with an evil end, because the hero took the cloak of invisibility from us, and all this land has had to serve him.'

1120 Then the chamberlain went to fetch the keys. Kriemhilt's men stood before the mountain, and also some of her kinsmen. They ordered the treasure to be carried to the sea, to the skiffs. They took
1121 it upstream over the waves to the Rhine.

Now you may hear marvels told about the hoard: all that twelve waggons could carry at their utmost was taken away in four days

and nights from the mountain. Moreover, each of the waggons had to go there three times a day. The treasure consisted entirely of 1122
precious stones and gold. Even if every man in all the world were to be paid out of it, it would not have been worth a mark less. It was not without good reason that Hagen had desired it. The most perfect 1123
that lay among the treasures was a little rod of gold.* A man who had learned its secrets might easily be master over every man in the world. Many of Albrich's kinsfolk left along with Gernot. 1124

Once they had stored the hoard in Gunther's land and the queen had taken charge of it all, the chambers and towers were filled with it. Never again were such marvels heard tell of treasure. Yet even if 1125
there had been a thousand times as much, if Lord Sivrit might be alive again, Kriemhilt would have stood beside him empty-handed. No hero ever won a more loyal wife. 1126

Now that she had charge of the hoard, she brought many foreign warriors into the land. The lady's hands gave away so much that greater generosity was never beheld. She practised great courtesy, they said of the queen. She now set about giving gifts to rich and poor alike, to such 1127
an extent that Hagen said that if she were to live any longer, she would gain so many men for her service that it might cost them dear. 1128

Then King Gunther said: 'The treasure is hers for life. How might I forestall anything she does with it? It was with great difficulty that I won her favour. Let us not trouble ourselves now over where she shares out her silver and her gold.' 1129

Hagen said to the king: 'No right-thinking man ought to abandon the hoard to one woman alone. By her gifts she will yet bring about a day that the bold Burgundians may well rue.' 1130

King Gunther replied: 'I swore an oath to her that I would never harm her again, and will guard against it from now on—she is my sister.'

Then Hagen answered: 'Let me be the guilty party.' 1131

The oaths that several of them had sworn were not kept. They took the great treasure from the widow. Hagen took charge of all the keys. That angered her brother Gernot when he found out about it. 1132
Then Lord Giselher said: 'Hagen has done my sister much wrong. I ought to forestall this. If he were not my kinsman it would cost him his life.' Sivrit's wife then wept anew. 1133

Then Lord Gernot said: 'Rather than be forever plagued by this gold, we should have it all sunk in the Rhine, so that it never belongs to any man.'

Kriemhilt went to her brother Giselher and stood before him most
1134 piteously. She said: 'Dearest brother, think of my plight. You ought to be the protector of both me and my property.'

He replied to the lady: 'That will be done when we come back. We
1135 have it in mind to go riding.'

The king and his kinsmen, all the best among them there, then left the land, except for Hagen alone, who remained behind because
1136 of the enmity he bore Kriemhilt, and was most willing to do so. Before the mighty king had come back, Hagen meanwhile had taken charge of the treasure in its entirety. He sank it all in the Rhine by Lochheim. He thought he would find a use for it—that could
1137 not be.

The princes came back with men in great numbers. Kriemhilt then began to lament over her great loss, together with her maidens and ladies. They were deeply grieved. Giselher would willingly
1138 have shown her nothing but loyalty. They all said as one then: 'Hagen has acted ill.'

Hagen stayed out of reach of the princes' wrath for long enough, until he regained their favour. They let him live. Kriemhilt could
1139 never have been more hostile towards him than at that time. Before Hagen of Tronege thus hid the treasure they had sworn such strong oaths that it would be hidden until only one of them should be left alive. In time to come they could neither give it to themselves nor
1140 anyone else. Kriemhilt's mind was saddened by new sorrows about her husband's end, and when they had thus taken all her wealth from her, her mourning never ceased her whole life long, not until her very
1141 last day. After Sivrit's death—I tell you nothing but the truth—she dwelt there in great sorrow for thirteen years, not being able to forget
1142 the warrior's death. She was loyal to him, as all and sundry aver.

TWENTIETH ADVENTURE

HOW KING ETZEL SENT TO BURGUNDY FOR KRIEMHILT

It was about that time that Lady Helche died, and King Etzel sought another wife. Then his allies counselled him to look to Burgundy,
1143 where there lived a proud widow who was called Lady Kriemhilt. Now that fair Helche had died, they said: 'If you ever want to win a

noble wife, the highest in rank and the best a king ever won, then take that same lady. Mighty Sivrit was her husband.' 1144

Then the great king said: 'How might that happen, since I am a heathen and am not baptized? The lady, for her part, is a Christian, which is why she won't consent to this. It would be a marvel if it were ever to come about.' 1145

Yet his bold allies replied: 'What if she will perhaps do so because of your high repute and your great wealth? We ought at least to make an attempt with that most noble lady. It would please you greatly to make love to that fair woman.' 1146

Then the noble king said: 'Now who among you is acquainted with the people by the Rhine and the land?'

Then worthy Rüedeger of Pöchlarn said: 'I have known those proud, noble kings since childhood: Gunther and Gernot, those 1147 noble, worthy knights. The third is called Giselher. Each of them acts with all the best possible honour and virtue. Their ancestors had also always done the same.' 1148

Then Etzel spoke again: 'Friend, you must tell me if she is fit to wear a crown in my land. If she is as beautiful as I am told, it would never be to the harm of my best allies.' 1149

'She may readily be likened in beauty to my dear lady, great Helche. No king's wife could be fairer in this world. He whom she consents to have as her beloved has good reason to be content.' 1150

Etzel said: 'Then undertake this, Rüedeger, by the love you bear me. If I am ever to lie with Kriemhilt I will reward you as best as I can, for you will have carried out all my wishes. From my treasury 1151 I'll order that you be given all the horses and clothes that you desire, so that you and your companions may be of good cheer. I will have you well equipped for this embassy.' 1152

Rüedeger, the wealthy margrave, answered: 'If I were to desire your possessions, it would not be to my credit. I will willingly be your messenger to the Rhine and pay for it with my own wealth, which I have from your hands.' 1153

Then the great king said: 'Now, when do you want to leave to woo the lovely lady? May God keep you in all honour on this journey, and my lady also. May good fortune help me to make her gracious to us.' 1154

Rüedeger then spoke again: 'Before we leave this land we must first prepare arms and clothing so that we can appear with honour before princes. I will take five hundred gallant men to the Rhine. 1155

Whenever they see me and my men in Burgundy, let them all say of you that never did any king send so many men so far and so well
1156 equipped as you have to the Rhine. That is if you won't desist, great king, because her noble love was subject to Sivrit, Sigmunt's son, whom you've seen here.* In all truth, much honour might be spoken
1157 of him.'

Then King Etzel said: 'If she was that warrior's wife, then that noble prince was so worthy that I should not disdain the queen. She
1158 pleases me well because of her great beauty.'

The margrave then said: 'That being so, I say to you that we will set off from here in twenty-four days. I shall send tidings to Gotelint, my
1159 dear wife, that I myself want to be the ambassador to Kriemhilt.'

Rüedeger sent the tidings to Pöchlarn. The margravine was both sad and proud then. He told her the tidings that he was to woo a wife
1160 for the king. She thought lovingly of fair Helche. When the margravine heard the tidings, she was somewhat sad—it befitted her to weep, wondering whether she would gain such a lady as she had be-
1161 fore. When she thought of Helche, it hurt her deeply.

Rüedeger rode away from Hungary in seven days' time. King Etzel was pleased and well content with that. They prepared clothes for
1162 them in the city of Vienna. Then he could put off his journey no longer. Gotelint was expecting him over in Pöchlarn. The young margravine, Rüedeger's daughter, was always glad to see her father and his
1163 men. Then fair maidens were full of fond expectations. Before noble Rüedeger rode out of the city of Vienna, heading for Pöchlarn, their clothes had been loaded in their entirety onto the packhorses. They
1164 travelled in such fashion that little might be taken from them.*

When they entered the town of Pöchlarn, the host* asked in most friendly fashion that his travelling companions be given lodgings and saw to it that they were given every comfort. Noble Gotelint was
1165 glad to see her lord arrive, as was his dear daughter, the young margravine—nothing could be dearer to her than his arrival. How glad she was to see the heroes from the lands of the Huns! Smiling, the
1166 noble damsel said: 'You are heartily welcome here, my father and his vassals!' Many a worthy knight took pains to give good thanks to the young margravine there.

1167 Gotelint knew Lord Rüedeger's intent full well. Yet as she lay close by Rüedeger that night, how kindly she questioned him as to where the King of Hungary had sent him! He said: 'My lady Gotelint, I'll

willingly make it known to you. I am to woo a new wife for my lord, 1168
now that fair Helche has perished. I want to ride to the Rhine, to woo
Kriemhilt. She is to be queen in power over the Huns here.' 1169

'Would God that might come to pass,' said Gotelint, 'since we hear such high honour spoken of her! She might well make amends for the loss of my lady, in our old age. Moreover, we would be glad to see her wearing a crown among the Huns.' 1170

Then the margrave said: 'My beloved, you must in friendship offer your wealth to those who are to ride with me to the Rhine. When heroes ride richly accoutred, their spirits are high.' 1171

She said: 'There is no one amongst them to whom I will not give whatever they are willing to accept, and whatever befits them, before you and your vassals depart from here.'

The margrave replied: 'That pleases me well.' 1172

Oh, what rich phellel-silks were carried out of her chamber! They were given to the noble warriors in profusion then, carefully lined with fur from the neck down to the spur. Rüedeger had chosen companions who pleased him for his purpose. 1173

On the seventh morning the lord rode away from Pöchlarn with his warriors. They took with them abundant weapons and clothes through Bavaria. Seldom were they attacked by robbers on the road. Within twelve days they had come to the Rhine. Then those 1174
tidings could no longer be concealed. King Gunther and also his vassals were told that foreign strangers were arriving. The lord then asked if anyone were acquainted with them—he was to be told who 1175
they were. They saw that their packhorses were so heavily burdened. It was evident that they were very wealthy. Lodgings were at once provided for them in the spacious city. When these entire 1176
strangers had entered the city, those lords were the subject of much scrutiny. They wondered from where the warriors had ridden to the Rhine. The king sent for Hagen to see if he might be acquainted with them. 1177

Then the hero of Tronege said: 'I haven't seen anything of them. Once we've seen them, I may well be able to tell you where they've ridden from to this land. They must be from very far away if I'm not quick to recognize them.' 1178

By now the strangers had taken up their lodgings. The ambassador and his companions had donned luxurious clothing. Then they rode to court. Their garments were fine and of most elegant cut. 1179

Then bold Hagen said: 'As I understand, although I have not seen the lord for a long time, their bearing suggests that it is Rüedeger, the
1180 bold and proud warrior from the lands of the Huns.'*

'How am I to believe', said the king at once, 'that the Lord of Pöchlarn has come to this land?'

The moment King Gunther had finished speaking, bold Hagen
1181 glimpsed worthy Rüedeger. He and his friends all ran out of the palace. Five hundred men were seen to alight from their horses then. Those from Hungary were then given a good welcome. Never did
1182 messengers wear such splendid garments.

Then Hagen of Tronege said in a loud voice: 'In God's name, welcome to these warriors, the overlord of Pöchlarn and all his men!'
1183 This was the welcome given in honour of the bold Huns.

The king's closest kinsmen came up to see them. Ortwin of Metz said to Rüedeger: 'We have not been so glad to see guests here for a
1184 very long time, I truly aver!'

They thanked the warriors on all sides then for their greeting. With their servitors they went into the great hall, where they found the king alongside many a bold man. The lord rose from his seat.
1185 That was an act of great courtesy. How very courteously he walked over to the messengers! Gunther and Gernot took great pains to welcome the guest, as well befitted him, and also his men. Gunther
1186 took worthy Rüedeger by the hand. He led him over to the seat where he himself was sitting. They ordered that the guests be poured excellent mead—that was done with a will—and the best wine to be found
1187 in the lands all round the Rhine.

Giselher and Gere had both arrived. Dancwart and Volker had also heard about these guests. They were happy at heart. Before the
1188 king they welcomed the noble and worthy knights. Then Hagen of Tronege said to his lord: 'These warriors ought always to be in the margrave's debt for what he has done for our sake.* Fair Gotelint's
1189 husband ought to receive his reward for that.'

Then King Gunther said: 'I cannot refrain from asking: how do they both fare, tell me, Etzel and Helche of Hungary?'

1190 The margrave replied: 'I will gladly inform you.' Then he stood up from the seat, as did all his men. He said to the king: 'If it so be, prince, that you give me leave, then I will no longer be silent about the tidings that I bring and will gladly tell them to
1191 you.'

Gunther said: 'Without my allies' counsel,* I give you leave to tell whatever tidings you have been sent to bear to us. Let me and my men hear them, for I grant you permission to fulfil your task in all honour here.' 1192

Then the deserving ambassador said: 'My great overlord sends his loyal homage to you by the Rhine, and to all the friends you may have here. Moreover, this embassy is brought to you entirely in good faith. The noble king asked that you should grieve over his distress. 1193 His people are bereft of joy. My lady is dead, great Helche, my lord's wife. Great numbers of damsels are now orphaned by her death, daughters of noble princes whom she has reared, and now the land 1194 is in a most wretched state. They now have no one, sadly, to care for them with kindness. For that reason I believe the king's sorrow will also be very slow to wane.' 1195

'Now God reward him', said Gunther, 'for so willingly sending his homage to me and my friends. I am glad to have heard his greeting here. Both my kinsmen and my vassals shall willingly serve to merit it.' 1196

Then Gernot, the warrior of Burgundy, said: 'The world may ever rue fair Helche's death because of the very many virtues she practised.' Hagen agreed with his words, as did great numbers of other warriors. 1197

Then Rüedeger, that proud and noble ambassador, spoke again: 'Since you give me leave, king, I shall tell you more of what tidings my dear lord has sent you here, now that his affairs are in such a wretched state after Helche's death. My lord is told that Kriemhilt 1198 is bereft of a husband, that Sir Sivrit has died. If this is so, if you will grant her permission, then she shall wear a crown before Etzel's warriors—my lord bade her be told this.' 1199

Then the mighty king said—he was of a well-bred disposition—'She will hear my decision, if she's willing to accept Etzel's offer. I will tell you of it within three days. Why should I refuse Etzel before I have found out how she feels?' 1200

In the meantime they ordered that the guests be given every comfort. They were served so well that Rüedeger declared he had good friends there, among Gunther's men. Hagen served him gladly; Rüedeger had done the same for him before. Thus Rüedeger then 1201 stayed until the third day. The king sent for counsel, acting most wisely, and asked whether his kinsmen thought it good that Kriemhilt should take King Etzel for her husband. They all advised it as one, 1202

except for Hagen, who said to Sir Gunther:* 'If you were wise, then it would be well to forestall this. Even if she were to agree to it, you
1203 should never do this.'

'Why shouldn't I agree to it?' replied Gunther. 'I shouldn't begrudge the queen any happiness that befalls her—she is my sister.
1204 We ought to seek to bring this about ourselves, if it's to her honour.'

Then Hagen spoke again: 'Now let the matter be. If you were as well acquainted with Etzel as I am, and if she then takes him for her beloved, as I hear you suggest, then sorrow of your own making will
1205 befall you as never before.'

'Why?' replied Gunther. 'I shall guard well against coming so close to him that I should suffer any enmity from him, if she were to become his wife.'

1206 Hagen again said: 'I will never counsel this.'

They sent for Gernot and Giselher to ask whether those two lords thought it good that Kriemhilt should become the beloved of that mighty, proud king. Still Hagen alone advised against it, and no one
1207 else.

Then Giselher, the warrior of Burgundy, said: 'Now, friend Hagen, you may yet practise loyalty. Make her amends for the wrongs you have done her. You ought to have no quarrel with any good
1208 fortune that befalls her. After all, you have done so many wrongs to my sister.' Giselher, that most gallant warrior, went on to say: 'She has good reason to be bitter towards you. Never was any lady robbed
1209 of more joy.'

[Hagen replied:]* 'I'll tell you what I know for certain: if she is to take Etzel for her husband, if she lives long enough she will yet cause us much sorrow, no matter how she brings it about. She will have
1210 great numbers of gallant men at her service.'

At that bold Gernot answered Hagen: 'It may well prove that we never ride into Etzel's land until both he and Kriemhilt are dead. We
1211 must be loyal towards her, as befits our honour.'

Hagen spoke in reply: 'No one may gainsay me. If noble Kriemhilt is to wear Helche's crown, she will do us harm, no matter how she
1212 contrives it. It would befit you warriors far better to let this be.'

Giselher, fair Uote's son, answered angrily: 'It is not for all of us to act in bad faith. We ought to rejoice in any honours that befall her. No matter what you say, Hagen, I'll serve her out of my
1213 loyalty.'

When Hagen heard those words, he grew angry. Gernot and Giselher, those proud and worthy knights, and mighty Gunther at last agreed that if Kriemhilt assented, they would have no objection. 1214

Then Prince Gere said: 'I'll tell the lady she should let King Etzel find favour with her. So many warriors are subject to him, looking on him with awe. He can readily make amends to her for all the wrongs she has ever won.' 1215

Then the bold warrior went before Kriemhilt. She welcomed him graciously. How quick he was to speak then! 'You may gladly greet me and give me my messenger's bread! Good fortune desires to part you with all speed now from all your anguish! Lady, in pursuit of 1216 your love, one of the very best who ever gained a king's land in all honour, or rightly wore a crown, has sent here for the sake of your love. Noble knights have been sent to woo you. Your brother bade that you be told this.' 1217

Then the lady, rich in sorrow, said: 'God forbid that you and all my friends should mock me, wretched woman that I am. What use would I be to any man who ever gained heartfelt love* from a good woman?' 1218

She spoke strongly against it. Later Gernot, her brother, and young Giselher then came to her, asking her lovingly to find solace. If she were to take the king, it would truly be for her own good. Yet no one 1219 could persuade the lady to love any man. The knights then asked her: 'Well, let it at least come to pass, even if you will go no further, that you deign to see the ambassador.' 1220

'I will not refuse', said that most noble lady, 'to see Rüedeger willingly on account of his many virtues. If he'd not been sent here, if it were any messenger other than he, he'd never make my acquaintance.' She said: 'You must tell him to come to my chamber 1221 here tomorrow. I will let him hear in full what is my will, and shall tell him in person.' Her most grievous mourning was renewed. 1222

Noble Rüedeger desired nothing else at that time but to see the proud queen. He knew himself to be so wise that if the meeting were ever to take place, she might allow the warrior to persuade her. Early 1223 the following morning, as mass was being sung, the noble messengers came up—there was great bustling there—those who wanted to go to court with Rüedeger. Proud men in great numbers were to be seen in their raiment there. 1224

Proud Kriemhilt, most sad in spirits, had been expecting Rüedeger, that noble and worthy ambassador. He found her in the garments that she wore every day, although her retinue wore sump-
1225 tuous clothes in plenty. She walked over to the door to welcome him and received Etzel's vassal most graciously. He entered her chamber with only eleven others. They offered him great homage; never had
1226 ambassadors of higher rank come to them. They bade the lord and his men be seated. Before her they saw the two margraves standing, Eckewart and Gere, those noble, worthy warriors. They saw that out of respect for the lady of the house no one was in high spirits
1227 there. They saw great numbers of beautiful women sitting before her. At that time Kriemhilt practised nothing but sorrow. Her dress was
1228 wet with hot tears, down to her breasts. The noble margrave saw that clearly.

Then the lordly ambassador said: 'Most noble king's daughter, give myself and my companions who have come with me leave to stand
1229 before you and tell you the reason why we have ridden here.'

'Now be permitted', said the queen, 'to say all that you want. Such is my intent that I will gladly hear your tidings. You are a worthy ambassador.'

1230 The others could clearly hear her reluctance then.

Prince Rüedeger of Pöchlarn then said: 'Etzel, that proud king, sends tidings of his great love in good faith, lady, to you in this land
1231 here. He has sent many worthy warriors here in pursuit of your love. He offers you his fervent love, without sorrow. He is ready to give you constant friendship, as he did before to Helche, who had her place in his heart. He has had many a joyless day since the death of
1232 that virtuous queen.'

The queen replied: 'Margrave Rüedeger, if anyone were aware of my great grief, he would not ask me to love any man yet. Indeed,
1233 I lost one of the best husbands a lady ever won.'

'What can make amends for sorrow,' said the valiant warrior, 'except loving affection, if a man is capable of that and then chooses one who befits him? Nothing is of such great avail against heartfelt
1234 sorrow. If you deign to love my noble lord, you will hold power over twelve prosperous crowns. Moreover, my lord will give you some thirty princes' lands, all of them conquered by his most courageous
1235 hands. You will also be lady over many worthy vassals who were subject to my Lady Helche, and over many ladies over whom she

had power, of high princely kin,' said the bold, valiant warrior. 1236
'In addition, my lord will give you—this he bade me tell you—if you deign to wear a crown alongside the king, the greatest authority that Helche ever gained. You shall have such power over Etzel's men.' 1237

Then the queen said: 'How could I ever desire to become a hero's wife? Death has injured me so greatly, depriving me of one hero, that I must remain joyless until the end of my days.' 1238

The Huns spoke again: 'Mighty queen, your life with Etzel will be so truly renowned that it will give you constant joy if it comes to pass, for the mighty king has splendid knights in great numbers. 1239
If Helche's damsels and your maidens were to form one retinue together, warriors would be in high spirits. Accept this counsel, lady—it will truly be for your own good.' 1240

She spoke courteously: 'Let the matter rest now until tomorrow morning; then come here again. I will give you my answer to what you have in mind.' The bold and worthy warriors had no choice then but to do as she said. 1241

When they had all gone to their lodgings, the noble lady sent for Giselher, and also for her mother. She said to both of them that weeping best became her, and nothing else. Then her brother 1242
Giselher said: 'Sister, I am told and will readily believe that King Etzel will put an end to all your sorrows if you take him as a husband. No matter what anyone else advises, I think it would be well done. He can readily make you amends,' Giselher went on. 'From the 1243
Rhone to the Rhine, from the Elbe to the Mediterranean,* no king is so powerful. You will have good reason to rejoice if he proclaims you his wife.' 1244

She said: 'My dear brother, why do you give me such counsel? To lament and weep forever would become me better. How could I go to court there before the warriors? If I ever possessed beauty, I am bereft of it now.' 1245

Then Lady Uote said to her dear daughter: 'Do all that your brothers advise, dear child. Act on the advice of your friends, and you may well prosper. I have seen you in great grief for so long now.' 1246

Then Kriemhilt implored God time and again to grant her the power to give away gold, silver, and clothing, as she had done before at the side of her husband when he was still alive. Never afterwards did she live through such joyful times. She thought to herself: 'If I, 1247
being a Christian woman, am to give myself to a pagan, I must be

forever disgraced in this world. Even if he were to give me all his
1248 kingdoms, I will never do this.'

She let matters rest at that. Through the night until dawn came the lady lay in her bed, troubled by many thoughts. Her bright eyes were
1249 never dry until she went to matins again in the morning.

The kings had arrived promptly for mass. Again they had taken their sister in hand. They advised her to take the King of Hungary for
1250 her beloved. They all found the lady far from happy.

Then they sent for Etzel's men, who would by now willingly have taken their leave, whether their wooing should have by then proved successful or not. Rüedeger then came to court. The heroes agreed
1251 amongst themselves that they should find out the noble prince's* intentions, and do so speedily. That seemed to all of them a good idea. The ways back to their own land were long. Rüedeger was taken
1252 into Kriemhilt's presence. The warrior then began to ask the noble queen, in all friendship, to let him hear what message she wanted to
1253 send to Etzel's land. I believe he heard nothing but her denial that she would ever love any man again. Then the margrave said: 'That would be ill done. Why would you thus waste such beauty as yours?
1254 You may yet with honour become a worthy man's wife.'

None of their pleading was of avail until Rüedeger spoke in private with the proud queen, saying that he would make amends to her for all
1255 that ever befell her. At that her great distress began to abate somewhat. Rüedeger said to the queen: 'Let your weeping be. If you had among the Huns none but myself alone, my loyal kinsmen and also my vassals,
1256 if anyone did you any harm he would have to pay for it dearly.'

The lady's mind was greatly relieved at that. She said: 'In that case, swear oaths to me that whatever wrongs anyone does to me, you will be the first to make amends for my sufferings.'

1257 The margrave replied: 'I am ready and willing to do so, lady.'

Rüedeger, together with all his men, then swore to her that they would always serve her loyally, and that the proud warriors from Etzel's land would never deny her anything that would be to her
1258 honour. Rüedeger's hand assured her of this.

The loyal lady then thought: 'Since I have won so many allies, then I shall let people say what they will, wretched woman that I am. What
1259 if my dear husband may yet be avenged?' She thought: 'Since Etzel has so many warriors, if I am to have command over them I can do whatever I will. Moreover, he is, I believe, so wealthy that I will have

the wherewithal to make gifts. That accursed Hagen has robbed me of my wealth.' 1260

She said to Rüedeger: 'If I had not heard that he is a heathen, then I would gladly go wherever he wished and would take him for a husband.'

The margrave replied: 'Do not speak so, lady. He has so many warriors of the Christian faith that you will never be sorry at the king's side. What if you were to succeed in bringing about his baptism? For that reason you may gladly become King Etzel's wife.' 1261 1262

Then her brothers spoke again: 'Give your promise, now, my sister. You must let your distress be.' They pleaded with her so long until the sad queen at last promised before the heroes that she would be Etzel's wife. 1263

She said: 'I will take your advice, poor queen that I am, and will go to Hungary as soon as that may now be, once I have found friends to escort me into Etzel's land.' Fair Kriemhilt offered her hand on this oath before the heroes. 1264

Then the margrave said: 'For any two men that you have, I have all the more. It will be carried out well, and we will take you across the Rhine in all honour. You must stay here no longer, lady, in Burgundy. 1265 I have five hundred men and also my kinsmen, who will be at your service here and do all that you command of them at home, lady. I myself shall do the same whenever you remind me of my words, provided I never do anything of which I might be ashamed. Now bid them pre- 1266 pare your riding habit for you! You will never rue Rüedeger's counsels— and tell your maidens of this, those that you want to take there with you, that great numbers of excellent heroes will meet us on the road.' 1267

They still had such smithcraft on their horses, from their riding back in Sivrit's times, that she could in all honour lead maidens in great numbers, whenever she wanted to leave. Ah, what fine saddles were found for the fair ladies! If they had ever before worn any sumptuous 1268 clothing, that was now made ready for their journey in abundance, for they had been told so much of King Etzel. They opened up the chests which had been well locked until then. They were fully occupied for 1269 a good four-and-a-half days, seeking out clothes from the folds in which they lay in abundance. Kriemhilt then set about having her treasury unlocked. She wanted to make all Rüedeger's men rich. 1270

She still had so much gold from the land of the Nibelungs—she intended that her hands should share it out among the Huns—

that a good hundred packhorses could never carry it. Hagen then
1271 heard tell of these tidings about Kriemhilt. He said: 'Since I will never find favour with Lady Kriemhilt, then Sivrit's gold must remain here. Why should I abandon so much wealth to my foes?
1272 I know full well what Kriemhilt will do with this treasure. If she were to take it away from here, I fully believe it would be shared out to incite enmity against me. They shan't even have the horses to carry it. Hagen wants to keep it here—let Kriemhilt be told as
1273 much!'

When she came to hear those tidings she was deeply grieved. It was also told to all three kings. They would gladly have forestalled
1274 this. When that did not come about, noble Rüedeger said merrily: 'Mighty queen, why do you mourn over the gold? King Etzel is so well disposed towards you that, once his eyes have beheld you, he'll give you so much that you'll never be able to squander it away. This
1275 I swear to you, lady.'

The queen replied: 'Noblest Rüedeger, no king's daughter ever gained such wealth as that of which Hagen has deprived me.'

1276 Then her brother Gernot went into her treasury. With the king's authority he thrust the key into the door. Thirty thousand marks or even more of Kriemhilt's gold was handed out. He bade the guests
1277 take it. That met with Gunther's approval.

At that Gotelint's husband, the Lord of Pöchlarn, said: 'Even if my lady Kriemhilt were to possess all the gold that was ever brought from the land of the Nibelungs, neither mine nor the queen's hands
1278 ought to lay hands on it. Now tell them to keep it, for I want nothing of it. I've brought so much of my own wealth from my land that we can easily do without that gold on the road, and our costs on the
1279 journey from here will be splendidly covered.'

Meanwhile her maidens had filled twelve coffers with the very best gold to be found anywhere. That was taken away with them from there, along with many ladies' ornaments for them to take on their
1280 journey. Grim Hagen's power seemed too great to her. Of the offerings for Sivrit's soul she still possessed a good thousand marks in gold. She shared them out for the sake of her dearest husband's soul.
1281 Rüedeger thought that a deed of great loyalty.

Then the lady, lamenting, said: 'Where are my friends who for my sake want to go into exile, who must ride with me to Hungary? Let
1282 them take my treasure to buy horses, and also garments.'

Margrave Eckewart said to the queen in reply: 'Ever since I first joined your retinue, I have served you loyally,' said the knight, 'and will ever be in your service until my end. Moreover, I will take with 1283
me five hundred of my men, whose loyal service I grant you. We will remain unseparated unless death do us part.'

Kriemhilt bowed to him for those words, as was only right. 1284

Then the packhorses were led up; they wanted to depart. Much weeping took place on the part of friends there. Most mighty Uote and many a fair maiden showed that they grieved at Lady Kriemhilt's departure. She led away with her a hundred wealthy maidens, who 1285
were dressed as well befitted them. Tears fell down then from bright eyes. Afterwards she was to have much happiness at Etzel's side. 1286

Then Lord Giselher, and also Gernot, came up with their retinues, as their courtesy commanded of them. They wanted then to escort their dear sister on her departure. They brought with them a good thousand of their gallant warriors. Along came bold Gere, and also 1287
Ortwin. Rumolt, the master of the kitchen, had of necessity to be of the company. They provided overnight quarters as far as the bank of the Danube. Gunther then only rode a little beyond the city. Before 1288
they departed from the Rhine they had sent ahead their speedy messengers to Hungary, to tell the king that Rüedeger had wooed that proud and noble queen for his wife. 1289

TWENTY-FIRST ADVENTURE

HOW KRIEMHILT TRAVELLED TO THE HUNS

Let the messengers ride! We must make known to you how the queen made her way through the lands—or where Giselher and Gernot parted from her. They had served her as their loyalty commanded of them. They rode as far as the Danube then, to Pföring. 1290
They asked leave of the queen, for they wanted to ride back to the Rhine. Good friends then could not part without weeping. 1291

Bold Giselher said to his sister: 'Whenever, lady, you have need of me, if anything troubles you, let me know of it and I will ride to serve you into Etzel's land.' 1292

She kissed those who were her kinsmen on the mouth. The bold Burgundians were seen on that occasion to part in all friendship from

Rüedeger's men. The queen then took with her well-favoured maid-
1293 ens in great numbers, one hundred and four of them, wearing sump-
tuous cloaks of richly dyed furs. The warriors carried many broad
shields* close by the ladies on the roads. Then proud knights in great
1294 numbers parted from the queen.

They made hasty progress down through Bavaria. Then tidings were told that many unknown guests were fast approaching a place where a monastery still stands, and where the Inn flows into the
1295 Danube. In the city of Passau there resided a certain bishop. The lodgings there were emptied,* as was the prince's court. They hastened to meet the strangers up in Bavaria, where Bishop Pilgrim*
1296 found fair Kriemhilt. The warriors of that land were not overly distressed then to see so many fair maidens in her train. Amorous eyes looked upon the noble knights' daughters. Good lodgings were
1297 afterwards given to the guests.

The bishop rode with his niece to Passau. When the townsfolk were told that Kriemhilt, the prince's sister's daughter, was arriving,
1298 she was given a warm welcome then by the merchants. The bishop had his hopes that they would stay there some time. Lord Eckewart then said: 'That cannot be. We must go down into Rüedeger's land. Many knights are expecting us, for they are all well aware of how
1299 things stand.'

By now fair Gotelint was well aware of the tidings. She and her most noble daughter busied themselves with preparations. Rüedeger had sent her a message that it seemed good to him that she should
1300 comfort the queen's mind by riding, together with his vassals, to meet her upriver by the Enns. When that took place, the roads were seen to be busy everywhere. Both on horseback and on foot they made their
1301 way to meet the guests.

Now the queen had arrived at Eferding. Plenty of people from Bavaria might well have caused the strangers harm there if they
1302 had robbed them on the roads, as was their custom. That was easily forestalled by the proud margrave. He led with him a thousand knights, and even more. By then Gotelint had also arrived, Rüedeger's
1303 wife; with her came hosts of noble warriors in great splendour.

When they had crossed the Traun, on the plain near Enns, they saw huts and pavilions pitched there, where the guests were to stay overnight. Rüedeger had gone to this expense for the guests
1304 there.

Fair Gotelint left the lodgings behind her. Along the roads walked many handsome horses, the bells on their reins chiming. The welcome that was given was most fair; it met with Rüedeger's approval. Those 1305
who approached them on both sides of the roads rode in praiseworthy fashion; knights in great numbers were present. They practised chivalry, as great numbers of maidens saw. Nor did the knights' service displease the queen. When Rüedeger's men came to meet 1306
the guests, many splinters were seen flying high from the warriors' hands,* according to knightly custom. They then rode before the ladies, meeting with great praise there. 1307

The jousting was brought to an end. Many men then greeted each other with great kindness. Then they led fair Gotelint into Kriemhilt's presence. Those who knew how to serve ladies had little rest there. 1308
The overlord of Pöchlarn rode up to his wife. The noble margravine was not displeased that he had thus come back from the Rhine safe and sound. Some of her sorrow was taken from her, giving way to great joy. When she had welcomed him, he told her to alight upon the 1309
meadow with all the ladies she had with her there. Many a noble man busied himself there, taking great pains to serve the ladies. 1310

Then Lady Kriemhilt saw the margravine standing with her retinue—she let her palfrey go no further. She pulled at the reins and asked that she be quickly lifted down from the saddle. Next they saw 1311
the bishop—he and Eckewart—lead his niece over to Gotelint. Great numbers of people at once made way for them there. Then the exiled lady kissed Gotelint on the mouth. Rüedeger's wife then spoke most 1312
charmingly: 'Blessed am I, dear lady, that my eyes have seen your fair person here in these lands. No greater joy could ever befall me now.' 1313

'Now may God reward you,' said Kriemhilt, 'most noble Gotelint! If I and Botelunc's son* keep our health, you may yet rejoice at having seen me here.' (Neither had knowledge of what was to happen thereafter.) 1314

Maidens in great numbers walked courteously up to one another. The warriors were ready to serve them with alacrity. After greeting each other they sat down upon the clover. They made the acquaintance of many who had been complete strangers to them before. 1315
They ordered that wine be poured for the ladies. It was about midday. The noble company lay there no longer. They rode over to where they found many broad huts; great hospitality was at the disposal of the noble guests there. That night they rested until early morning. 1316

Those of Pöchlarn made preparations for accommodating great numbers of noble guests. Rüedeger had acted well in seeing to it that
1317 they lacked little there. They could see that the windows in the walls stood open, and that the castle of Pöchlarn had its gates ajar. Then the guests rode in, the people rejoicing to see them. The noble host
1318 ordered that they be given every comfort. Rüedeger's daughter walked over with her retinue to welcome the queen most charmingly. Her mother, the margave's wife, was also present. Damsels in
1319 great numbers were greeted fondly. They took one another by the hand and walked into a spacious palace, which was very beautiful, the Danube flowing beneath it. They sat facing the fresh air, taking
1320 their ease.

What else they did there I cannot tell. Kriemhilt's warriors were heard then to lament that they delayed so long, for it grieved them.
1321 Ah, what worthy knights rode away with her from Pöchlarn! Rüedeger offered them service in all friendship. Then the queen gave twelve torques of red gold to Gotelint's daughter, and such good
1322 garments that she took nothing better with her into Etzel's land. Even though the Nibelungs' gold had been taken from her, she won the favour of all who beheld her with what little wealth she had at her
1323 disposal there. Great gifts were given to the host's household.

In return Lady Gotelint then offered such kindly hospitality to the guests from the Rhine that very few guests were to be found who did
1324 not wear her jewels or her sumptuous garments.

When they had eaten and were to depart, Etzel's wife was offered loyal homage by the lady of the house. The fair damsel, her daughter,
1325 met with many embraces there. She said to the queen: 'Whenever you think it right, I know well that my dear father would willingly agree to send me to you in Hungary.' Kriemhilt clearly discerned that
1326 she was loyal to her.

The horses had been made ready and brought before Pöchlarn. By then the noble queen had taken her leave of Rüedeger's wife and of his daughter. Then fair maidens in great numbers also parted from
1327 one another with farewells. They were seldom to see one another after those days.

When they passed by Melk, sumptuous golden vessels were carried to them in great numbers, bringing wine to the guests on the road—
1328 they were made to feel welcome. A lord resided there who was called Astolt. He guided them along the road into Austria, towards Mautern,

downstream alongside the Danube. There the mighty queen was afterwards given great service. 1329

The bishop parted lovingly from his niece. How firmly he pressed it upon her that she should bear herself well and purchase honour, as Helche had done before her! Ah, what great honour she afterwards won there among the Huns! 1330

Then they took the guests to the Traisen. Rüedeger's men took great care of them, until they came to where the Huns were riding across country. Much great honour was done then to the queen. 1331 The King of Hungary had a prosperous castle by the Traisen, which was very well known, called Traismauer.* Lady Helche had resided there before, practising such great virtue as perhaps will never be seen again—unless it were equalled by Kriemhilt, who knew how to make 1332 such gifts. After her sorrow she was able to experience the happiness of Etzel's men also speaking of her honour, which she afterwards gained in great abundance among those heroes. 1333

Etzel's power was so widely known that at all times at his court the boldest of warriors ever heard of were to be found, be it among Christians or heathens—they had all made their way there with him. Those of the Christian faith, and also those of pagan 1334 beliefs, were about him at all times, all practising their different ways of life—that may perhaps never come to pass again. The king's generosity saw to it that plenty was given to them all. 1335

TWENTY-SECOND ADVENTURE

HOW KRIEMHILT WAS WELCOMED BY ETZEL

She stayed at Traismauer until the fourth day. All that time the dust never settled on the road, but flew into the air as if everywhere were ablaze. King Etzel's men were riding through Austria. By now 1336 the king himself had been given a full account of how splendidly Kriemhilt was making her progress through the lands—at that his sorrows vanished from his thoughts. The king made haste to meet the well-favoured queen. On the roads ahead of Etzel many bold knights 1337 were seen to ride, conversing in many and various tongues, vast hosts in great numbers of Christians and pagans. In splendour they came to where they found the lady. There were riders in great numbers from 1338

Russia and from Greece there. The excellent horses of the Poles and the Wallachians* were seen to gallop fast, ridden hard. Little did they
1339 neglect all their native customs. Warriors from the land of Kiev rode there in great numbers, and the wild Pechenegs.* There was much shooting with the bow at the birds flying past there. They drew their
1340 arrows back to the very limit of their bows.

There is a place that lies by the Danube in Austria which is called Tulln. There Kriemhilt became acquainted with a great number of strange customs which she had never seen before. Plenty of people welcomed her there who afterwards met with sorrow for her
1341 sake.

The retinue that rode before King Etzel was merry and most prosperous, courteous and gallant, some twenty-four princes of high degree and proud. They wished for nothing other than to see their
1342 lady. Duke Ramunc of Wallachia came charging past her with seven hundred men. They saw them ride like birds in flight. Then Prince
1343 Gibeche arrived with hosts of great splendour. Bold Hornboge with some thousand men turned away from the king to head for his lady. Loud was the clamour they made, as was that land's custom. The
1344 kinsmen of the Huns also rode hard there.

Then bold Hawart of Denmark came up, and brave Irinc, well guarded against falsity, and Irnfrit of Thuringia, a gallant man. They
1345 welcomed Kriemhilt in such fashion as did them honour, with twelve hundred men, whom they led in their host. Then came Lord Blœdelin, Etzel of Hungary's brother, with three thousand men. He made his
1346 way magnificently into the queen's presence.

Then King Etzel, and also Sir Dietrich with all his companions, arrived. There were many noble and worthy knights, doughty and of great renown, present there. That then raised Lady Kriemhilt's
1347 spirits high. Then Lord Rüedeger said to the queen: 'Lady, I want to welcome the proud king here.* Let all those whom I bid you kiss be granted that favour. You may not, after all, greet all of Etzel's men in
1348 equal fashion.'

Then the proud queen was lifted down from her palfrey. Mighty Etzel waited no longer then. He dismounted from his horse, along
1349 with many bold men. They saw him walk joyfully towards Kriemhilt. Two mighty princes, so we are told, carried the queen's train, walking alongside her, as King Etzel walked towards her, and there she
1350 welcomed the noble prince with a gracious kiss.

She drew back her head-dress. Her well-favoured complexion shone out of the gold. There were great numbers of men there who said that Lady Helche could not have been fairer. Close to her there stood the king's brother, Blœdelin. Rüedeger, the powerful margrave, 1351
bade her kiss him and King Gibeche. Dietrich was also standing there. Etzel's wife kissed twelve of the warriors. She also welcomed knights in great numbers with her greeting then. 1352

All the while that Etzel stood by Kriemhilt's side, the youths there acted as people still do today. Many a great joust was seen to be ridden there. Christian heroes, and also the pagans, carried those out according to their customs. With what true chivalry 1353
Dietrich's men caused the shafts to break into splinters which flew high over the shields at the good knights' hands! Many a shield's rim was riddled with holes by the German guests. Great clamour 1354
was heard then of shafts being broken. By now all the warriors of the land had arrived, and the king's guests also, noble men in great numbers.

Then the mighty king walked away with Lady Kriemhilt. They 1355
saw standing nearby them a most splendid pavilion. All around the plain was full of huts in which they were to rest after their labours. Many a fair maiden was led beneath these by heroes, along with the 1356
queen, where she afterwards sat down on a sumptuous upholstered seat. The margrave had seen to it that Kriemhilt's seat was thought most splendid. Etzel was delighted at that. What Etzel said on that 1357
occasion is not known to me. Her white hand lay in his right hand. They sat lovingly together there, as Sir Rüedeger did not want to let the king be intimate with Kriemhilt yet. 1358

Then they ordered that the bohort be abandoned, all over the plain. The great clamour ended amid honour there. Etzel's men then went into the huts. Lodgings were given them far and wide. The 1359
day was at an end now. They took their rest until they saw the bright morning shine again. By then many men had made for their horses. Ah, what pastimes they undertook to do the king honour! 1360

The king asked the Huns to arrange matters as befitted his honour. Then they rode from Tulln to the city of Vienna. There they found well-attired ladies in great numbers. They welcomed King Etzel's wife with great honours. 1361

All that they needed was at their disposal in abundance. Gallant heroes in great numbers looked forward to the clamour. They began

1362 to find lodgings for them. The king's festivity began joyfully. They could not find lodgings in the city for all. Rüedeger asked those who were not guests to take lodgings out in the country. I believe that
1363 Lord Dietrich and many other knights were to be seen at all times at Lady Kriemhilt's side. They had forsaken rest for labour in order to bring good cheer to the guests. Rüedeger and his allies passed the
1364 time pleasantly.

The wedding, when King Etzel lay with Kriemhilt in the city of Vienna, had fallen upon a Whitsun day. I don't believe she ever had
1365 so many men at her service with her first husband. She made herself known by gifts to those whom she had never beheld before. Great numbers amongst them said to the strangers: 'We thought that Lady Kriemhilt would have no wealth—now her gifts have brought about
1366 great marvels here!'

The wedding festivity lasted seventeen days. I believe no man has ever told of any king whose festivity was greater—we have
1367 never heard the like. All those present there wore new clothes. Never, I believe, did Kriemhilt preside over so many warriors in the Netherlands. Moreover, I believe that though Sivrit was rich in wealth, he never acquired so many noble warriors as she saw stand-
1368 ing before Etzel.

Nor did anyone ever, at his own wedding, give away so many sumptuous cloaks, long and wide, nor such good garments, which were at
1369 their disposal in plenty, as Etzel's men all gave for Kriemhilt's sake. Her allies and also the guests were all of one mind—not to be sparing with regard to any kind of possessions there. Anything anyone asked of them was readily given. Thus many of the knights there were left
1370 bereft of clothing because of their generosity.

Kriemhilt thought back to the days when she resided by the Rhine alongside her noble husband. Her eyes grew wet. She took great care to conceal this, so that no one could see it. After much sorrow so
1371 many honours had befallen her.

No matter how much generosity was practised, it was all as nothing compared with that of Dietrich. All that Botelunc's son had given him was now entirely squandered away. Generous Rüedeger's hands
1372 also wrought many marvels there. Prince Blœdelin of Hungary bade that coffers in great numbers be emptied there of silver and gold—that was given away there. The king's heroes were seen to live in
1373 great joy.

Wärbel and Swemmelin, the king's minstrels, I believe, both gained at that wedding some thousand marks or even more, there where fair Kriemhilt sat at Etzel's side beneath her crown. 1374

On the eighteenth morning they then rode away from Vienna. Many shields were hewn to pieces by the lances borne by the warriors' hands in chivalrous pursuits. Thus King Etzel returned to Hungary. 1375

In old Hainburg they passed the night. No one could count then the numbers of the people, nor with what companies they rode across the lands. Ah, what fair ladies they found in Etzel's homelands! 1376 At prosperous Wieselburg they took ship. The river was so covered over by horses and men as if it were solid ground, so little could be seen of its flow. The way-weary ladies found both peace and rest there. 1377

Many excellent skiffs were lashed together, so that neither waves nor the tide might harm them. Over them many good tents were pitched, as if they still had both land and fields beneath them. 1378

Tidings of this then came to Etzelnburc, where men and women alike rejoiced. Helche's retinue, over whom the lady had previously presided, rejoiced in many a joyous day with Kriemhilt. Noble maid- 1379 ens in great numbers stood in expectation there, who had had much sorrow since Helche's death. Kriemhilt found seven further kings' daughters there, an ornament to all of Etzel's lands. 1380

The damsel Herrat still had charge of the retinue, Helche's sister's daughter, rich in virtue, Dietrich's bride, a noble king's child, the daughter of Nântwin—she afterwards acquired great honour. She 1381 rejoiced at the arrival of the guests. Moreover, great prosperity had been prepared to meet the occasion. Who could tell you how the king resided thereafter? Never did the Huns live better with a queen than there! 1382

When the king rode away from the riverbank with his wife, it was explained to her who each of the ladies was. They greeted noble Kriemhilt all the better for that. Ah, how powerfully she afterwards resided in Helche's stead! Much loyal homage was paid to her. The 1383 queen then distributed gold and garments, silver and precious stones. All that she had brought across the Rhine with her to the Huns had to be given away in its entirety. Moreover, all the king's kinsmen and 1384 all his vassals afterwards became her subjects and served her, so that she had more power at her command than Lady Helche had ever had, and they were now obliged to serve Kriemhilt until her death. 1385 The court, and also the country, then stood in such high repute that

everyone enjoyed such pastimes as their hearts desired at all times
1386 there, for love of the king and the queen's wealth.*

TWENTY-THIRD ADVENTURE

HOW KRIEMHILT SAW TO IT THAT HER BROTHERS CAME TO THE FESTIVITY

Amid great honour—I tell you in all truth—they resided together until the seventh year. By that time the queen had given birth to a
1387 son. At that King Etzel's joy could never have been greater. Kriemhilt insisted on having Etzel's child baptized afterwards according to the Christian order. It was named Ortliep. There was
1388 great joy at this all over Etzel's lands.

For many a day thereafter Kriemhilt now set about practising all the virtuous courtesies that Lady Helche had possessed. Herrat, the maiden in exile, taught her the custom of the land. In secret she
1389 mourned greatly over Helche. Kriemhilt was very well known to strangers and acquaintances alike. They said that no lady ever presided over a king's land in a better and more generous way—that was their true belief. She held that repute among the Huns until the
1390 thirteenth year.

By now she had clearly discerned that no one opposed her—as even now a king's warriors do a prince's wife—and that she saw twelve kings before her at all times. Yet still her thoughts turned to
1391 the many wrongs that had befallen her back at home. She thought also of the great honour in the land of the Nibelungs over which she had had power, and of which Hagen's hands had entirely deprived her by Sivrit's death, and wondered whether he might yet still
1392 come to suffer at her hands for that. 'That might come about if I could bring him into this land!'

She dreamt how her brother Giselher walked hand in hand with her time and again. She very often kissed him in her sweet slumbers—
1393 thereafter they were both to meet with sorrow.

I believe it was the Foul Fiend who prompted Kriemhilt to sever the bond of friendship with Gunther, whom she had kissed in reconciliation in Burgundy. Yet again her clothes were tainted by
1394 hot tears. Early and late it lay in her heart how they had brought

it about, through no fault of her own, that she had to love a pagan husband. Hagen and Gunther had caused her this anguish. Seldom 1395
did this resolve leave her heart. She thought: 'I am so powerful and have such great wealth that I may yet inflict some suffering upon my foes. I would gladly do so, indeed, upon Hagen of Tronege. My 1396
heart often grieves for those who were loyal to me. As for those who inflicted suffering upon me there, if I could have them about me, then my beloved would be well avenged—I can hardly wait for that,' said Etzel's wife. 1397

At that time all the king's men, Kriemhilt's warriors, held her dear—that had worked out very well. Eckewart had charge of the treasury, winning allies thereby. No one could thwart Kriemhilt's purpose. She thought constantly: 'I will ask the king,' that he should 1398
kindly grant her* that her friends be brought to Hungary. No one discerned the queen's evil purpose. 1399

One night as she lay by the king—he had his arms about her as was his custom when making love to that noble lady; she was as dear to him as his life—the proud queen's thoughts turned to her foes. She 1400
said to the king: 'My dearest lord, I would gladly ask you, if it were to meet with your favour, to show me if I have merited that my friends might be truly dear to you.' 1401

The mighty king replied—loyal was his disposition—'I will show you that clearly. Whenever happiness and good fortune befalls those warriors, I have reason to rejoice, for I never gained better allies through love of a woman.' 1402

Then the queen said: 'As you have been told, I have many kinsmen of high birth. That is why I am so sorry that they so seldom deign to see me here. I hear the people say of me that I am nothing but an exile.' 1403

King Etzel replied: 'My dearest lady, if they didn't think it too far, I would invite them to cross the Rhine—all those you would gladly see—to come here to my lands.'

The lady was pleased when she found that was his will. She said: 1404
'If you will keep your word to me, my lord, then have messengers sent to Worms across the Rhine, and I'll send messages to my friends to tell them what I have in mind. Then noble, worthy knights in great numbers will come to us here in this land.' 1405

He said: 'Let it take place as soon as you give the order. You can't be as willing to see your friends as I would be to see noble Uote's sons. It troubles me greatly that they have been strangers to us for

so long. If it pleases you well, my dearest lady, I would gladly send my fiddlers to Burgundy to invite your friends.'

He bade the worthy fiddlers be brought at once. They hastened to where the king sat alongside the queen. He told them both that they were to be sent as messengers to Burgundy. He then bade that garments of great splendour be prepared for them. Clothes were prepared for twenty-four warriors. Moreover, they were told by the king the message they were to take, that they were to invite Gunther and his men to Hungary. Lady Kriemhilt spoke to them in private.

Then the mighty king said: 'I shall tell you what you are to do. I wish my friends joy and all good fortune, and may they deign to ride into my lands here. Seldom have I had such dear guests. If Kriemhilt's kinsmen want to meet with my wishes at all, they should not omit to come to my festivity this summer, for much of my joy lies with my in-laws.'

Then proud Swemmelin the fiddler said: 'When is your festivity in these lands to be? Let us know so that we can tell your friends there.'

King Etzel replied: 'At the next solstice.'

'We shall do all that you command,' said Wärbelin then.

The queen asked that they be brought secretly to her chamber, where she spoke to the messengers. (Knights in great numbers met with little joy in consequence.)

She said to the two messengers: 'Now earn great wealth if you will kindly carry out my wishes and give the message I send home to our land. I shall make you rich in property and give you splendid garments. You must never tell any of my friends that you may see in Worms on the Rhine that you ever saw me low in spirits. Give my homage to the bold and worthy heroes. Ask that they do the king's bidding, and thus part me from all my misery. The Huns must think that I lack any friends. If I were a knight I'd visit them from time to time. And tell Gernot, my noble brother, that no one in this world could hold him dearer. Ask him to bring our best friends with him to me in this land, to do us honour. And tell Giselher also that he should bear in mind that I never suffered any wrong at his hands, and therefore my eyes would very much like to see him here. I would be most glad to have him here because of his great loyalty. Tell my mother, too, of the honour I possess here. And if Hagen of Tronege wanted to remain there, who then would lead them through the lands? He has known the roads to Hungary well since his youth.'

The messengers did not know at all why they had been told that they should not let Hagen of Tronege remain by the Rhine. It cost them dear afterwards. When war was declared on Hagen, it consigned many a knight along with him to grim death. 1420

The letters and the embassy had now been given to them. They journeyed rich in wealth and could live in splendour. Etzel, and also his fair wife, gave them leave to depart. They were attired in noble garments. 1421

TWENTY-FOURTH ADVENTURE

HOW WÄRBEL AND SWEMMEL CARRIED OUT THEIR LORD'S EMBASSY

WHEN Etzel sent his messengers to the Rhine, those tidings then flew from land to land. Employing speedy messengers, he both asked and summoned guests to his festivity. (Many a man fetched his death there in consequence.) 1422

The messengers made their way out of Hungary to the Burgundians. They had been sent there to three noble kings, and also to their vassals. They were to come to Etzel. Hasty progress was then made. 1423

They came riding to Pöchlarn. There people served them willingly, omitting nothing there. Rüedeger and Gotelint, and also their dear daughter, sent their homage to the Rhine by the messengers. They 1424 didn't permit them to part from them without gifts, so Etzel's men travelled in even better style. Rüedeger's message then to Uote and her children was that no other margrave held them so dear as he. 1425 They also sent a message to Prünhilt, offering her homage and wealth, constant loyalty and goodwill. Once they had heard these words the messengers were intent on departing. The margravine asked God in Heaven to protect them. 1426

Before the messengers had passed through Bavaria, speedy Wärbel sought out the good bishop. What message Bishop Pilgrim then sent to his friends by the Rhine is not known to me—only that he gave his gold, so red, to the messengers in token of his affection. 1427 He let them ride. Bishop Pilgrim said: 'If I were to see them here, my sister's sons, I would rejoice, for I can seldom go to the Rhine to them.' 1428

What ways they took through the lands to the Rhine I cannot tell. No one took their silver and garments from them*—they feared their
1429 lord's wrath. The noble, well-born king did indeed wield great power.

Within twelve days Wärbel and Swemmelin had come to the Rhine, to the country near Worms. Tidings were then told to the kings and their vassals that foreign messengers had arrived. Gunther then put
1430 questions. The overlord of the Rhineland then said: 'Who will tell us from where these strangers have ridden into the land?'

No one knew until Hagen of Tronege saw them. He then said to
1431 Gunther: 'Fresh tidings have come to us, I assure you. I have seen Etzel's fiddlers here. Your sister has sent them to the Rhine. For their
1432 lord's sake they must be warmly welcomed.'

Already they were riding past the palace. Never did a prince's minstrels ride in greater splendour. The king's retinue welcomed them at once.
1433 They gave them lodgings and had their garments put in store.

Their travelling clothes were costly and so fair that they might have honourably gone before the king, dressed as they were. They no longer wanted to wear those clothes at court there. The messen-
1434 gers had it be asked if anyone wanted to have them. People were indeed found of such a degree that they were most willing to accept the clothes*—they were sent to them. Then the strangers donned far
1435 better garments, as befits a king's messengers to wear in splendour. Etzel's retinue then went, having been given leave, to where the king sat. People were glad to see this.

Hagen leapt up courteously to meet the messengers and welcomed
1436 them with affection. The squires thanked him for that. He asked for tidings as to how Etzel and his men fared.

The fiddler replied: 'The land was never in a better state, nor the
1437 people so happy. Rest assured of that.'

They walked over to the lord of the land. The palace was packed full. Then the guests were welcomed as strangers to other kings' lands ought to be, with gracious greetings. Wärbel found many
1438 warriors in Gunther's presence there.

The king greeted them with courtesy: 'Welcome, both you minstrels of the Huns, and your companions. Has mighty Etzel sent you
1439 here to Burgundy?'

They bowed to the king. Then Wärbelin said: 'My dear lord sends you his cordial homage, as does Kriemhilt, your sister, here into this
1440 land. They have sent us in good faith to you warriors here.'

Then the mighty king said: 'I rejoice in these tidings. How fares Etzel,' asked the knight then, 'and Kriemhilt, my sister, in Hungary?'

The fiddler replied: 'I shall tell you tidings of them—never did 1441
any folk fare better than those two, you may rest assured, and all their servitors, their kinsmen, and also their vassals. They took pleasure in this journey of ours when we departed.' 1442

'Gracious thanks for the homage that he and my sister have sent me, since things so stand that the king and his men live in happiness, for I asked with some anxiety about those tidings.' 1443

By now the two young kings had also arrived. They had then only just heard about these tidings. For love of his sister, young Giselher was glad to see the messengers. He then spoke with affection to them: 1444

'You messengers would be heartily welcome here if you wanted to ride more often to the Rhine. You would find friends here whom you might be glad to see. Little harm will befall you here in this land.' 1445

'We trust you will treat us with all honour,' said Swemmelin then. 'I couldn't tell you, so poor are my wits, what truly loving greetings Etzel has sent you, as has your noble sister, whose affairs stand in high honour. The king's wife would remind you of your 1446
favour and loyalty, and that your heart and mind were ever fond of her. First and foremost, we have been sent to the king here to ask if you will deign to ride into Etzel's land. Mighty Etzel commanded 1447
us most earnestly that we should ask you all whether you do not want to see your sister—otherwise he would gladly like to know what wrong he does you, in that you thus avoid him and also his lands. 1448
Even if you had never made the queen's acquaintance, he might still have merited that you should deign to see him. Whenever that were to come about, it would give him pleasure.' 1449

Then King Gunther said: 'In seven nights' time I will let you know what I have determined upon with my allies. Meanwhile you must go to your lodgings and rest well.' 1450

Wärbelin spoke again: 'Might it be possible that we first see my lady, Uote the most powerful, before we seek our rest?'

Noble Giselher replied most courteously: 'No one shall stand in your 1451
way if you want to go before her. You will have granted my mother's wish entirely, for she will be glad to see you for the sake of my sister, Lady Kriemhilt. You will be welcome visitors to her.' 1452

Giselher took them into the lady's presence. She was glad to see the messengers from Hungary. She greeted them with affection,

courteous as she was. Then the courtly and worthy messengers told
1453 her their tidings.

'My lady sends you her loyal homage,' so said Swemmelin. 'If it might be, she would gladly see you often. You must believe that never
1454 in this world would she enjoy greater happiness.'

The queen replied: 'That cannot be. Gladly though I would see my dear daughter often, I fear the noble king's wife lives too far away.
1455 I wish eternal blessings upon her and Etzel. You must let me know, before you depart from here, when you want to go back. Never was I so glad to see such messengers as you, not for a long time.'

1456 The squires promised her then that they would have that happen.

The men from Hungary went to their lodgings. By then the mighty king had sent for his allies. Noble Gunther asked his men how the
1457 matter pleased them. Great numbers of them then spoke up. The best amongst them advised that he would do well to ride to Etzel's land—except for Hagen alone. He was fiercely opposed to the journey. He said to the king in secret: 'You have declared war upon
1458 your own self. You are only too well aware of what wrong we have done Kriemhilt. We must always be wary of her, for I slew her husband with my own hands. How might we dare ride into Etzel's
1459 lands?'

The mighty king replied: 'My sister has renounced her anger. With a loving kiss she forgave us for all the wrongs we ever did her, before she rode away from here—were it not that you alone, Hagen,
1460 are her declared foe.'

'Now do not let yourself be deceived,' said Hagen. 'No matter what the messengers from the Huns say, if you want to see Kriemhilt, you may well lose your honour and even your life there. King Etzel's wife
1461 is very long-toothed in vengeance.'*

Then Prince Gernot addressed the counsel: 'Although you rightly fear death there in the Hunnish realms, if we for that reason were to
1462 desist from seeing our sister, that would be a very ill deed.'

Then Prince Giselher said to the warrior: 'Since you know you are guilty, friend Hagen, you ought to remain here and be on your guard,
1463 and let those who dare travel with us to my sister.'

The warrior of Tronege grew angry at that: 'I don't want you to take anyone on the ways who would more willingly dare ride to court with you than I. Since you will not desist, I shall give you good proof
1464 of that.'

Then the master of the kitchen, Sir Rumolt, said: 'You could order both strangers and acquaintances to be as well cared for here as you would wish, for you have all the supplies you need. I don't believe that Hagen has ever yet made hostages of you. If you will not take 1465
Hagen's advice, then Rumolt counsels you—for I am your most loyal servant—that you should stay here as I wish, and leave King Etzel alone there with Kriemhilt. How might you ever fare better in this 1466
world? You are quite safe from your foes' attacks. You ought to attire yourselves in good garments, drink the best of wine, and make love to comely women. Moreover, you will be given the best food any king 1467
in the world ever had. Even if this were not so, you ought to remain for the sake of your fair wife, rather than risk your life so childishly. 1468
Therefore I counsel you to remain here. Your lands are wealthy. If you were taken hostage, you could be ransomed more easily here at home than there among the Huns. Who knows how things stand there? Remain here, lords—that is Rumolt's counsel.'* 1469

'We do not want to remain here,' said Gernot then, 'since my sister and mighty Etzel have invited us so amicably. Why should we not go? Anyone who does not want to go there can stay at home here.' 1470

Hagen answered: 'Do not think ill of my words, no matter what befalls you. I advise you in good faith: if you want to protect yourself, then you must travel well-guarded to the Huns. Since you will not 1471
desist, then send for your men—the best you can find, no matter where they be. Then I will choose a thousand worthy knights from amongst them all. That way Kriemhilt's evil intent may not harm you.' 1472

'I will gladly give my consent to that,' said the king at once. Then he ordered messengers to ride far and wide into his lands. They fetched three thousand heroes or more then. (They didn't believe they would gain such grievous suffering by this.) Merrily they rode 1473
into Gunther's land. Orders were issued that they all be given chargers, and also garments, those who were to depart from Burgundy. The king's goodwill won the favour of great numbers of men. 1474

Then Hagen of Tronege told Dancwart, his brother, to lead eighty of their warriors to the Rhine. They arrived with knightly bearing. Those courageous warriors brought armour and garments into Gunther's land. Then bold Volker joined the company, a noble 1475
minstrel, with thirty of his men, who had such garments as it might befit a king to wear. He had Gunther be told that he wanted to go to the Huns. 1476

Who Volker was I will make known to you: he was a noble lord, to whom many worthy warriors were subject in Burgundy. Because he
1477 could play the fiddle he was called the minstrel.

Hagen chose a thousand men. He was well acquainted with them and with what work their hands had wrought in fierce battles, and all that they had ever done—he had seen much of it for himself. No one
1478 could deny their valour.

Kriemhilt's messengers grew very weary of waiting there, for they were in great awe of their lord. Daily they desired leave to depart.
1479 Hagen would not grant it to them—that was a cunning ploy. He said to his lord: 'We must beware of letting them ride off much before we ourselves leave, seven days after them, for Etzel's land. If anyone
1480 bears us ill-will, we will find it out all the more easily. Then Lady Kriemhilt will not be able to prepare herself to have anyone harm us by her plotting. If such is her purpose it may turn out ill for her. We
1481 are taking so many excellent men there with us.'

Their shields and saddles, and all the garments that they wanted to take into Etzel's land had now been prepared for those great numbers of bold men. Kriemhilt's messengers were summoned to go before
1482 Gunther. When the messengers arrived, Gernot said: 'The king has given his assent to Etzel's invitation. We will gladly go to his festivity
1483 and see our sister—have no doubts on that count.'

Then King Gunther said: 'Can you tell us when the festivity is to be or on what days we are to arrive?'

Swemmelin replied: 'The festivity is to be held at the next solstice,
1484 for certain.'

The king permitted them—that had not yet come to pass—to see Lady Prünhilt if they wished, saying that they had his leave to go
1485 before her. Volker forestalled that then—that was done to please her: 'My lady Prünhilt is not at present so well disposed that you may see her,' said the worthy knight. 'Wait until tomorrow, and then they'll let her see you.' Yet when they thought to see her it could not then
1486 come to be.

Then the mighty prince—he held the messengers dear—ordered out of courtesy that his gold be carried there on broad shields, for he had much at his disposal. Costly gifts were also given them by his
1487 friends. Giselher and Gernot, Gere and Ortwin, made it clear that they too were generous. They offered such costly gifts to the messen-
1488 gers that they dared not accept them for fear of their lord.

Then the messenger Wärbelin said to the king: 'Sir King, let your gifts remain here in this land. We cannot take them with us. My lord forbade us to accept any gifts, and besides we have very little need of them.' 1489

Then the overlord of the Rhine grew very angry at them wanting to refuse such wealthy king's gifts. In the end they had to accept his gold and his garments, taking them with them afterwards into Etzel's land. 1490

They wanted to see Uote before they departed. Bold Giselher brought the minstrels before his mother Uote. The lady then sent a message that she rejoiced in all the honour in which Kriemhilt was held. Then the queen ordered that her braids and her gold be given 1491 to the minstrels for Kriemhilt's sake, for she was dear to her, and for the sake of King Etzel. They could accept that willingly, for it was given in good faith. 1492

Now the messengers had taken leave of both women and men there. Merrily they then travelled as far as Swabia. Gernot ordered his heroes to escort them there, so that no one should maltreat them. When those who were to attend them parted from them, 1493 Etzel's authority protected them on all the roads, no one taking their horses nor their garments from them. They made great haste into Etzel's land. Wherever they knew they had friends they made known 1494 to them that the Burgundians would, in no time at all, be making their way from the Rhine to Hungary. These tidings were also told to Bishop Pilgrim. 1495

When they rode down the road past Pöchlarn, people told Rüedeger of this—that was not omitted—and also Gotelint, the margrave's wife. She rejoiced that they should see them. 1496

The minstrels were seen to make good speed on their palfreys. They found Etzel in his town of Gran. They told the king of homage upon homage that had been sent him. He blushed for joy. 1497

When the queen found out for certain that her brothers were to come into that land, she was delighted. She rewarded the minstrels with great gifts—that did her honour. She said: 'Now tell me, both 1498 of you, Wärbel and Swemmel, which of my kinsmen want to be at the festivity? We have invited the best of them here to this land. Tell me now, what did Hagen say when he heard the tidings?' 1499

Wärbel said: 'He came to the counsel early one morning. He had little good to say on the matter. When they vowed to go on the

journey here to Hungary, grim Hagen thought they had consigned
1500 themselves all to death. Your brothers are coming, all three kings, in splendid spirits. Who is to be with them besides I cannot know for
1501 certain. Volker, the bold minstrel, vowed to ride with them.'

'I'd gladly dispense', said the king's wife, 'with ever seeing Volker here. I hold Hagen dear—he is a worthy hero. My spirits rise at the
1502 thought that we may see him!'

Then the queen went into the king's presence. How very affectionately Lady Kriemhilt then addressed him: 'How do these tidings please you, my dear lord? All that I ever desired is now to be
1503 fulfilled!'

'What you wish for makes me content,' replied the king. 'I never rejoiced so greatly at the prospect of my own kinsfolk ever coming here into my lands. For love of your friends, all my troubles have
1504 been banished.'

The king's officials ordered that the palace and great hall be equipped with seating on all sides for the dear guests who were to
1505 come. (In time to come they were to rob the king of much joy.)

TWENTY-FIFTH ADVENTURE

HOW THE NIBELUNGS TRAVELLED TO THE HUNS

Now let us tell no more of how they fared there. Prouder warriors never rode in such true splendour into any king's land. They had all
1506 that they wanted, both weapons and garments. The overlord of the Rhine had clad his men—a thousand and sixty, so I have heard, and nine thousand squires—to go to the festivity. (Those whom they left
1507 back home were to weep over it in time to come.) Then they carried the harness across the courtyard in Worms. An old bishop from Speier there then said to fair Uote: 'Our friends want to go to the
1508 festivity—may God guard their honour there!'

Then noble Uote said to her sons: 'You ought to remain here, worthy heroes. I dreamt last night of fearful peril—of how all the fowls in
1509 this land were dead.'

'Anyone who puts his faith in dreams,' said Hagen then, 'does not know how to tell the truth when all his honour is at stake. I want
1510 my lord to go to court to take his leave. We must ride willingly into

Etzel's land. There worthy heroes' hands may serve kings well, when we come to see Kriemhilt's festivity there.'

Hagen advised in favour of the journey, although he was to rue it afterwards. He would have advised against it, were it not that 1511
Gernot, with his uncouth words, had so insulted him; he had reminded him of Sivrit, Lady Kriemhilt's husband. He had said: 'That is why Hagen is not willing to go on the great journey to Etzel's court.' 1512

Hagen of Tronege had replied: 'I do nothing out of fear. You may set off as soon as you give the order, heroes. I'll gladly ride with you into Etzel's land.' Helmets and rims in great numbers were afterwards hewn to pieces by Hagen. 1513

The skiffs had been made ready.* Men were present in great numbers there. All their garments were carried on board. They were kept very busy until evening. Afterwards they departed from the castle in high spirits. Pavilions and huts were pitched on the meadow on the 1514
other side of the Rhine. When that had been carried out, the king's fair wife asked him to stay longer. That night she could yet make love to her gallant husband. 1515

Trumpets and flutes sounded out early next morning, when they were to depart. Then they set off. Whoever held his loved one in his arms made love to his beloved. (King Etzel's wife was to part many of those with grief in time to come.) 1516

The sons of fair Uote had one vassal, bold and loyal. As they were about to depart he told the king his thoughts in secret. He said: 'I cannot help being sad that you are making this journey to Etzel's court.' He was called Rumolt and was a man of mettle. He said: 1517
'To whom are you abandoning your people and your lands? Alas that no one can change your minds, you warriors! Kriemhilt's tidings never seemed good to me.' 1518

'Let the land and my baby be commended to you, and serve the ladies well—that is what I wish. If you see anyone weeping, give her comfort. King Etzel's wife will never do us harm.' 1519

The horses for the kings and their men had been made ready. Great numbers of men, all in high spirits then, departed with loving kisses. (Comely women in great numbers were to weep over this in time to come.) When they saw the bold warriors walk over to the 1520
horses, many ladies were seen to stand there in sadness. Their minds spoke to them of a very long parting and of great harm to come, such as always brings sorrow to the heart. 1521

The bold Burgundians set off. The land was full of bustle then. On both sides of the hills women and men wept. Despite the tears
1522 of their people, they departed merrily. The heroes of Nibelunc* departed with them, in a thousand hauberks. They had left behind them at home great numbers of fair ladies, whom they never beheld
1523 again. (Sivrit's wounds hurt Kriemhilt hard.)

Then Gunther's men directed their journey towards the Main, up through East Franconia. Hagen led them there—he knew the country well. Their marshal was Dancwart, that hero of
1524 Burgundy. As they rode from East Franconia towards Swalefeld, their proud demeanour was clearly to be observed, that of the princes and their kinsmen, those renowned heroes. On the twelfth morning
1525 the king came to the Danube. Hagen of Tronege then rode ahead of them all. He was a helpful comfort to the Nibelungs. Then the bold warrior alighted upon the shore; he quickly tied his horse to
1526 a tree.

The river was in flood, the skiffs hidden from their sight. The Nibelungs were greatly troubled as to how they were to cross—the flood-tide was too broad for them. Gallant knights in great numbers
1527 alighted upon the ground then.

'Harm may well befall you here, overlord of the Rhine,' said Hagen then. 'You can see for yourself now that the river is in flood; its current is very strong. I believe we will lose many worthy heroes here
1528 before the day is out.'

'Why do you reproach me, Hagen?' said the proud king. 'For your own repute's sake do not discourage us further. You must seek a ford for us to cross over to the land there, so that we can take both our
1529 horses and garments across.'

'I'm not so weary of life,' said Hagen, 'that I want to drown in these wide waves. Before that many a man will die at my hands in
1530 Etzel's lands—that is my firm intent. Stay by the river, you proud and worthy knights. I myself will seek the ferrymen by the tide, who will take us across into Gelpfrat's land.'

1531 Then strong Hagen took hold of his good shield's rim. He was most well armed. He took his shield with him. His helmet was buckled on; it shone brightly. Over his chainmail he then bore a broad sword, both
1532 of whose edges cut fiercely. He went up and down in search of the ferrymen. He heard water plashing in a fair spring. He listened—it was wise women, who wanted to cool themselves there and were

bathing. Hagen caught sight of them; he sneaked after them secretly. 1533
When they grew aware of him they hurried away. They were happy to escape him. He took their clothing from them—the hero did them no other harm. 1534

Then one of the water-sprites—she was called Hadeburc—said: 'Hagen, noble knight, if you, bold warrior, give us back our clothes, we will tell you here how this journey of yours to the court of the Huns will turn out.' 1535

They were floating in front of him like birds on the waves.* He thought therefore that they must be wise and cunning. He was all the more ready to believe all that they would tell him. They gave him a full answer to what he then asked of them. 1536

She said: 'You may ride with confidence into Etzel's land. I place my good faith as a pledge to you here and now that no heroes ever made better progress into any realm in such high honour. Rest assured of that.' 1537

Hagen was happy at heart then to hear those words. He gave them their clothes then and tarried no longer. When they had put on their wondrous garments they told him the truth about the journey into Etzel's land. The other water-sprite, whose name was 1538
Sigelint, spoke then: 'I will warn you, Hagen, Aldrian's son. My aunt has lied to you because of our clothes. If you arrive among the Huns, you'll be badly betrayed. Indeed, you ought to turn back—it is high 1539
time, for you bold heroes are invited to meet with certain death in Etzel's land. All that ride there are doomed to die.' 1540

Then Hagen replied: 'There is no need for you to deceive me. How might it happen that we should all lie dead there because of anyone's enmity?'

They gave him a better-informed account. The second of them 1541
spoke again: 'It is so fated that none of you can survive there except for the king's chaplain—we have full knowledge of this. He will return hale and healthy to Gunther's land.' 1542

Bold Hagen replied in a grim mood: 'Those would be harsh words to tell my lord—that we are all to lose our lives amongst the Huns. Now show us how to cross the river, wisest of all women.' 1543

She said: 'Since you won't abandon your journey—upstream by the river stands a lodge in which a ferryman lives. No other is to be found anywhere.'

He refrained from asking for further tidings then. 1544

One of the water-sprites called out after the wrathful warrior: 'Now stay a while, Sir Hagen, you are in far too great haste. Hear more about how you are to cross to the far shore. This march's lord
1545 is called Else. His brother is called Sir Gelpfrat, a lord in Bavaria. It will be very hard for you if you want to make your way through his march. You must be on your guard, and treat the ferryman with
1546 great discernment. He is so ferocious that he will not let you live unless you act well towards the hero. If you want him to ferry you over, then give him his reward. He keeps guard over this land and is dear
1547 to Gelpfrat. If he doesn't come in good time, then call out over the river and say you are called Amelrich. He was a worthy hero who left this land out of enmity. The ferryman will come over to you when his
1548 name is named to him.'

Haughty Hagen bowed to the ladies then. He spoke no more, but held his peace. Then he walked higher upstream to the shore, where
1549 he found a lodge on the far bank. He shouted out loud across the river: 'Fetch me from here now, ferryman,' called the worthy knight, 'and I'll give you a torque of red gold as a reward. I am sorely in need
1550 of this crossing, believe me!'

The ferryman was so wealthy that serving others did not become him, which is why he seldom accepted anyone's reward there. His squires were also full of pride. Hagen still stood alone on this side of
1551 the river. Then he shouted out with such power that all the waves resounded, for that hero's strength was great and mighty: 'Fetch me now—I am Amelrich, Else's vassal, who fled from this land in face
1552 of fierce hostilities!'

Held high on his sword, Hagen offered him a torque, bright and beautiful, red with gold, if he would ferry him across into Gelpfrat's
1553 land. The haughty ferryman himself took the rudder into his hands. It so happened that that ferryman had lately married. Lust for great wealth leads to an evil end. He wanted then to earn Hagen's gold, so red it was. For that he suffered death by the knight's fierce
1554 sword-work.*

The ferryman eagerly pulled across to the bank. When he did not find the man he had heard named there, he grew bitterly angry at the
1555 sight of Hagen. Ferociously he then said to the knight: 'You may well be called Amelrich, yet you bear little likeness to the man I expected to find here. He was my brother, on both my father's and mother's side.
1556 Since you have deceived me, you must stay on this side of the river!'

'No, by Almighty God!' replied Hagen. 'I am a warrior, a stranger to these lands, and have knights in my care. Now accept my payment in friendship today, and ferry me across—I will be truly beholden to you.' 1557

The ferryman then said: 'That cannot be. My dear lords have foes, which is why I will ferry no stranger into this land. If your life is dear to you, step quickly out onto the shore.' 1558

'Now don't do this,' said Hagen, 'for I am sad at heart. Accept in friendship this fine gold from me, and ferry across a thousand horses, and as many men for us.'

The grim ferryman replied: 'That will never be.' He lifted up a 1559 mighty oar, massive and broad, and struck such a blow at Hagen—to his dismay!—that he stumbled to his knees in the skiff. The man of Tronege had never met with such a fierce ferryman. He wanted then 1560 to provoke the haughty stranger to even greater anger. He broke a pole into smithereens upon Hagen's head—he was a mighty man! Yet Else's ferryman paid dearly for that there. Grimly, Hagen reached at 1561 once for his scabbard, where he found his sword. He struck off his head and threw it down onto the riverbed. Those tidings soon became known to the proud Burgundians. 1562

While he had been slaying the boatman, the skiff had drifted downstream, to Hagen's great trouble. Before he could right her again he grew weary. King Gunther's vassal pulled with all his might then. 1563 With powerful pulls the stranger turned her about, pulling so hard that the stout oar broke in his hand. He wanted to moor her on the shore near the warriors. Now no oar remained. Oh, how swiftly he then bound it together there with a shield-strap—that was a slen- 1564 der braid! He turned her downstream towards a forest. There he found his lord standing by the bank. Gallant men in great numbers then came towards him. Those bold, worthy knights greeted him 1565 heartily. Then they saw in the skiff the reeking blood from the mighty wound which Hagen had dealt the ferryman. The knights put plenty of questions to Hagen then. 1566

When King Gunther beheld the hot blood floating in the skiff, how quick he then was to speak! 'Why don't you tell me, Hagen, what has become of the ferryman? I believe your mighty courage has cost him his life!' 1567

Hagen replied, denying this: 'There where I found the skiff, by a wild willow, my hand untied it. I've seen no ferryman here today. Nor has anyone come to grief because of me here.' 1568

Then Lord Gernot of Burgundy said: 'I must fear for the death of dear friends today, since we have no boatmen at our disposal. I am
1569 troubled as to how we are to cross the river.'

Loudly Hagen called out then: 'Lay the harness down upon the grass, you squires. I believe I was the very best ferryman ever found by the
1570 Rhine. I trust I can take you safely over into Gelpfrat's land.'

So that they might cross the flooding river the more quickly, they drove their horses ahead with blows. They swam well, for the strong waves deprived them of none of them there. One or two drifted far
1571 downstream, so wearied were they.

Then they carried their gold, and also their garments, onto the skiff, since there was nothing for it but to make the crossing. Hagen was captain there; he led wealthy warriors in great numbers onto the
1572 shore, into a land unknown to them. First he took over a thousand proud knights, thereafter his own warriors. There were more of them still. He took nine thousand squires across into that land. The bold
1573 man of Tronege had much to do that day.

When he had brought them safe and sound across the flooded river, that bold and worthy knight thought back to the strange tidings that the wild water-sprites had told him earlier. The king's chap-
1574 lain almost lost his life by that. He found the chaplain by the chapel-baggage.* He was leaning with his hand on the relics. That was of no avail to him. Once Hagen had caught sight of him, the poor priest
1575 of God had troubles in store. Hagen hastily threw him out of the skiff. Plenty of them called out: 'Catch hold now, sir, catch hold!' Young Giselher grew angry at this, but Hagen was bent on doing the
1576 chaplain harm.

Then Lord Gernot of Burgundy said: 'Now what will the chaplain's death avail you, Hagen? If anyone else had done this, you'd have been angered at it! For what reason have you turned against the
1577 priest?'

The priest swam urgently—he wanted to save his life, if anyone could come to his aid. That could not be then, for mighty Hagen was in a very angry mood. He thrust him down to the riverbed—
1578 no one thought well of that. When the poor clergyman saw no help forthcoming, he crossed back over, suffering great distress. Although he was no swimmer, God's hand helped him emerge onto land
1579 again, safe and sound. Then the poor priest stood there and shook his clothes. Hagen saw clearly by this that there was no help for it, that the

wild water-sprites had told him the truth. He thought: 'These knights are doomed to lose their lives.' 1580

When they had unloaded their cargo from the skiff and carried it all onto land, all that the three kings' men had had on board, Hagen struck the skiff into pieces and threw it into the flooded river. The bold and worthy warriors wondered greatly at this. 'Why are you 1581 doing this, brother?' asked Dancwart. 'How are we to cross when we ride back from the Huns to our land by the Rhine?' (Afterwards Hagen told him that that could not be.) 1582

The hero of Tronege replied: 'I am doing this in the belief that if we have any coward on this journey who wants to run away from us, daunted in the face of danger, he will yet have to suffer shameful death in these waves.' 1583

There was one that they took with them from Burgundy, a man of mettle, who was named Volker. He voiced all his opinions with cunning. All that Sir Hagen ever undertook seemed good to the fiddler. 1584

Their chargers were readied, their packhorses well laden. They had suffered no losses to trouble them as yet on their journey, except for the king's chaplain. He had to make his way back to the Rhine on his own two feet. 1585

TWENTY-SIXTH ADVENTURE

HOW GELPFRAT WAS SLAIN BY DANCWART

WHEN they had now all landed on the shore, the king asked: 'Who is going to lead us on the right roads through the land, so that we do not go astray?'

Stout Volker replied: 'I myself will see to that.' 1586

'Halt now, knights and squires,' said Hagen. 'A man ought to heed his friends' counsel—that seems only right to me. I have dread tidings to tell you: we shall never return to Burgundy. Two water- 1587 sprites told me early this morning that we shall not return. Now I'll advise you as to what we're to do—arm yourselves, heroes! You must be on your guard! We have mighty foes here—let us make our way warily. I thought I might find that the wise water-sprites were lying. 1588 They said that none of us would return to our land safe and sound

save the chaplain. That's why I'd so willingly have drowned him
1589 today.'

Then those tidings flew from company to company, so that bold heroes grew pale with dread, as they feared meeting with grim death on that journey to a foreign court—they had good reason to be
1590 troubled.

They had crossed over by Möhringen,* where Else's ferryman had been slain. Then Hagen spoke again: 'Since I have earned enemies
1591 on the road, we will surely be attacked. I slew that ferryman early this morning. They must know these tidings. Be at the ready now! If Gelpfrat and Else attack our company here today, let them pay
1592 dearly for it. I know they are so bold that they won't forgo the opportunity. Let your horses walk at a slower pace, lest anyone should think that we are fleeing along the roads.'

1593 'I will follow that advice,' said Sir Giselher. 'Who is to guide the company across the land?'

They said: 'Let Volker do so. The ways and roads here are well known to the bold minstrel.' Even before the request had been put,
1594 they saw the bold fiddler standing there well-armed. He buckled on his helmet. His battle-gear was splendidly coloured. He also tied an emblem to a shaft, red in colour. (In time to come he, together with
1595 the kings, was to meet with grievous peril.)

By then sure tidings of the ferryman's death had reached Gelpfrat. Mighty Else had also heard of it. Both of them grieved
1596 over it. They sent for their heroes, who were quickly in readiness. Not long afterwards, let me tell you, the Burgundians saw men riding towards them who had inflicted injuries in hard-fought feuds and suffering beyond measure. Seven hundred or more of them came
1597 to Gelpfrat's aid. When they rode off in pursuit of their fierce foes, they were led by their lords. They were somewhat overhasty in their pursuit of the bold strangers, being angry and bent on vengeance.
1598 In consequence more of the lords' allies were lost.

Hagen of Tronege had made good arrangements then—how might a hero better guard his kinsmen? He took charge of the rearguard
1599 with his men and his brother Dancwart. That was very wisely done.

The day was at an end for them, they would see no more of it. Hagen feared harm and injury to his friends. They rode through Bavaria under cover of their shields. Not long afterwards the he-
1600 roes were attacked. On both sides of the road and close behind them

they heard hooves pounding. Someone was over-hasty! Then bold Dancwart said: 'They want to attack us here. Buckle your helmets on now—this is sound counsel I give!' 1601

They halted, having no choice but to break their journey. They saw the gleam of bright shields in the darkness. Then Hagen no longer wanted to hold his peace: 'Who is pursuing us on the road?'

Gelpfrat had no choice but to give him his answer then. The mar- 1602
grave from Bavaria replied: 'We are seeking our enemies and have pursued them as far as here. I don't know who slew my ferryman today. He was a man of mettle, and so I am much grieved.' 1603

Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'Was that ferryman yours? He wouldn't ferry us across. The guilt lies with me, then. I slew the warrior, for truly I had no choice. I had very nearly gained death at his hands. I offered him gold and garments as a reward for ferrying 1604
us over into your land, hero, but he grew so angry then that he struck at me with a stout pole—that made me angry enough! I reached for 1605
my sword then, and paid him back for his anger with a wound so deep that the hero was lost. I shall make you amends for that as you think fit.'

Then it came to blows—they were stout-hearted warriors. 1606

'I well knew,' said Gelpfrat, 'when Gunther and his company rode by here, that Hagen of Tronege would do us harm. He shall not survive now! The hero must pay the price here for the ferryman's end.' 1607

They lowered their lances over their shields now for the thrust, Gelpfrat and Hagen, eager to get at one another. Else and Dancwart rode splendidly, trying each other's mettle. There was fierce fighting then. How could heroes ever test one another better? Bold Hagen, by 1608
the force of Gelpfrat's joust, sat on the ground behind his charger. The breast-straps had broken. Now battle had made his acquaintance. 1609

From their company sounded out the loud crack of shafts. Then Hagen, who had fallen down into the grass at Gelpfrat's thrust, recovered himself there. I believe he had little love for Gelpfrat. 1610
Who held their chargers for them* is unknown to me. They had both ended up on the sand. Hagen and Gelpfrat ran at one another.* Their comrades helped them learn the meaning of battle. 1611

Grimly as Hagen leapt at Gelpfrat, the noble margrave hacked a huge piece out of his shield, so that fiery sparks flew up into the air. Bold Gunther's vassal came very close to death. He called out to 1612

Dancwart then: 'Help me, dear brother! A man of mettle has attacked me—he'll not let me live!'

1613 Bold Dancwart answered: 'I'll be the judge of that!'* The hero then leapt over and struck Gelpfrat such a blow with his sharp sword that he lay slain. Else would gladly have avenged him then. He and 1614 his company left with great losses. His brother was slain; he himself was wounded. Some eighty of his knights were left slain there and then by grim death. Their lord had no choice but to turn back in 1615 flight from Gunther's men.

When the Bavarians took to flight, fearsome blows were heard to be struck, as the men of Tronege pursued their foes. Those who had 1616 hoped not to pay such a price were all in great haste. When they had fled, Sir Dancwart said: 'We must turn back, quickly, on these roads and let them ride—they are wet with blood. Let us hasten to our 1617 allies. That is what I advise, in all truth!'

When they had returned to where the harm had happened, Hagen of Tronege said: 'Heroes, you must look now to see whom we are missing here, or whom we have lost here in this battle by Gelpfrat's 1618 wrath.'

They had lost four—they had to resign themselves to that. They had been well paid for. In return a hundred or more of the Bavarians had been slain. Hence the shields of the men of Tronege were dulled 1619 and wet with blood.

Part of the bright moon broke out of the clouds. Then Hagen spoke again: 'Let no one tell my dear lords what we have done here. 1620 Let them remain untroubled until tomorrow.'

When those who had done battle before had caught up with the others, weariness hurt the retinue hard. 'How long are we to ride?' asked many a man.

1621 Bold Dancwart replied: 'We cannot look for lodgings. You must all ride until daybreak.'

Brave Volker, who had charge of the household, sent to ask the marshal: 'Where shall we be tonight, so that our palfreys can rest, and 1622 also my dear lords?'

Bold Dancwart replied: 'I can't tell you. We can't rest until dawn breaks. Wherever we then find a meadow, let's lie down.'

1623 When they heard those tidings, how sorry some of them were! The hot red blood remained unremarked until the sun offered its bright beams to the morning over the hills, when the king saw that they had

been fighting. In great anger the hero said: 'How now, friend Hagen? 1624
I believe you disdained to have me with you when your chainmail was thus wetted by blood. Who has done this?'

Hagen said: 'It was Else who did this—he attacked us at night. We 1625
were charged at because of his ferryman. Then my brother's hand slew Gelpfrat. Afterwards Else escaped from us, hard pressed though he was. A hundred of them and four of us were left dead in the battle.' 1626

We can give no account of where they lay down to rest. All the countryfolk later came to hear that noble Uote's sons were making their way to court. They were afterwards well received at Passau. 1627
The noble kings' uncle, Bishop Pilgrim, was delighted when his nephews arrived in the land with so many warriors. It was soon made clear to them that he bore them goodwill. They were given a warm 1628
welcome by friends on the ways. In Passau itself they could not all be accommodated. They had to cross the river to where they found meadows. There huts and pavilions were pitched. They had to stay 1629
there for a whole day and all the following night. How splendidly they were tended! Thereafter they were to ride into Rüedeger's land. He was taken tidings of that in all haste. 1630

When the way-weary men had rested and they came closer to Rüedeger's land, they found a man asleep on the boundary, from whom Hagen of Tronege took a sturdy sword. That same worthy 1631
knight was called Eckewart. He was sad at heart to have lost his sword at the hand of the journeying heroes. They had found Rüedeger's march ill guarded. 1632

'Alas for this disgrace of mine!' said Eckewart then. 'I am greatly grieved by this journey of the Burgundians. Ever since I lost Sivrit my happiness has deserted me. Alas, Lord Rüedeger, how have I behaved towards you!' 1633

Hagen then heard clearly what anguish the noble warrior felt. He gave him back his sword, together with six torques of red gold. 'Keep these, hero, in token of my friendship. You are a bold knight, lying alone at the march.' 1634

'God reward you for your torques,' replied Eckewart. 'Yet I very much regret this journey of yours to the Huns. You slew Sivrit—they hate you here. I advise you in good faith to be on your guard.' 1635

'Now may God protect us!' said Hagen then. 'These knights' only concern—that of the kings and also of their vassals—is to seek lodgings, somewhere where we can find quarters before nightfall. 1636

Our horses are spent, the roads being so long, and our food has run out,' said Sir Hagen. 'We won't find anything for money here. We stand in need of a host who, out of his courtesy, might yet give us his
1637 bread this night.'

Then Eckewart replied: 'I'll show you such a host that you will seldom have come to a castle in any land and fared better than
1638 you may do here, if you bold warriors want to see Rüedeger. He resides close by the road here and is the best host who ever had a castle. His heart blossoms with courtesy, as the sweet May brings flowers to the meadow. Whenever he has to serve heroes, he is happy
1639 at heart.'

Then King Gunther said: 'If you will be my messenger, will you ask my dear friend Rüedeger if for my sake he will harbour us, my kins-
1640 men and our vassals? I will always seek to repay that as best I can.'

'I will gladly be that messenger,' replied Eckewart. With a good will, he made his way there to tell Rüedeger what he had heard. Not
1641 for many a day had such dear tidings come to him.

They saw a knight hastening towards Pöchlarn. Rüedeger himself recognized him. He said: 'Eckewart, one of Kriemhilt's men, is hurrying here along these roads.' He thought that enemies might
1642 have done him harm. Then he went out of the gate to meet the messenger.* Eckewart unbuckled his sword and laid it aside. The tidings he brought were not concealed from the host and his friends—
1643 they were soon told.

He said to the margrave: 'Lord Gunther of Burgundy has sent me to you, as has Giselher, his brother, and also Gernot. Each of the warriors
1644 offers you his homage, as do also Hagen and Volker, in fervent good faith. I have more to tell you still, a message that the king's marshal sent
1645 by me: the knights are in need of your hospitality.'

With a smile Rüedeger replied: 'Happy am I at these tidings, that the proud kings desire my services! They will not be denied them. If
1646 they enter my castle, I shall be well pleased.'

'Dancwart the marshal bid it be made known to you whom you are to have in your house along with them: sixty bold warriors and a thousand worthy knights, and nine thousand squires.'

1647 Rüedeger was happy at heart then. 'Happy am I to have these guests,' he replied, 'and that these proud warriors, whom I have as yet seldom served, are coming to my castle! Ride now to meet them,
1648 both my kinsmen and vassals!'

Then knights and squires hastened to their horses. Whatever their lord ordered them to do seemed just to all of them. They hastened all the more readily to serve him then. As yet Lady Gotelint, sitting in her chamber, knew nothing of this. 1649

TWENTY-SEVENTH ADVENTURE

HOW THEY ARRIVED IN PÖCHLARN

THEN the margrave went in search of his lady; he found his wife with his daughter and told them at once of the most welcome tidings he had heard—that their lady's brothers were to come to their castle there. 1650

'My most dearly beloved,' said Rüedeger then, 'you must give the warmest of welcomes to these noble, proud kings, when they come to court here with their company. You must also give a good greeting to Hagen, Gunther's vassal. Together with them there also comes one 1651 who is called Dancwart—another is called Volker, his courtesy well guarded. These six you and my daughter must kiss, and be courteous and gracious to the other warriors also.' 1652

The ladies then promised that they would and were willing to do so. They sought sumptuous clothes out from the chests, which they wanted to wear when they went to meet the warriors. Fair women were hard at work there. There were very few counterfeit ladies' 1653 complexions* to be found there. On their heads they wore bright bands of gold—costly garlands those were!—so that the winds should not disarray their beautiful hair. I swear this by my loyalty. 1654

Let us leave the ladies to such tasks. In great haste Rüedeger's friends rode across the fields to where they found the princes. They were given a warm welcome into the margrave's land. When bold 1655 Rüedeger the margrave saw them approaching him, he joyfully said: 'Be welcome, you lords, and your men also, here in my land! I am very glad to see you!' 1656

Then the warriors bowed to him in good faith, without rancour. He showed clearly that he bore them goodwill. He greeted Hagen separately—he knew him from former times. He gave the same greeting to Volker of Burgundy. He also welcomed Dancwart. Then that 1657 bold knight said: 'Since you want to look after us, who then is to take care of the company we have brought with us?'

1658 The margrave replied: 'You shall pass a good night, as will all your company. All that you have brought into the land with you, horses and garments, I shall put under such guard that nothing of it will be
1659 lost; not a single spur of yours will be harmed. Squires, put up the huts in the meadow. I stand surety for anything that you lose here. Take the reins off, let the horses walk free.'

1660 Seldom had any host treated them like that before. The guests were well pleased. When that had been seen to, the lords rode away. The squires lay down in the grass everywhere; they were very much at their ease. I believe they had never met with such kind treatment
1661 in the course of their journey.

The noble margravine had come out of the castle, with her most beautiful daughter. Then, standing by her, lovely ladies and many fair
1662 maidens could be seen, wearing many torques and splendid dresses. The precious stones in their sumptuous garments shone from afar. They were well-favoured women.

Then the guests also arrived and dismounted at once. Oh, what
1663 great good-breeding they found in the Burgundians! Thirty-six maidens and many more women, all of them perfectly formed, walked towards them, along with many a bold vassal. Pretty greet-
1664 ings were given by noble ladies there. The young margravine kissed all three kings, as did her mother. Hagen was also standing close by. Her father bade her kiss him. Then she glanced at him. He seemed
1665 so fearsome to her that she'd gladly have omitted to kiss him.* Yet she had to do what the host commanded her. Her complexion turned mixed, both pale and red. She kissed Dancwart also, and after that the minstrel. That greeting was given him because of the courage he
1666 possessed.

The young margravine took Giselher, the warrior of Burgundy, by the hand. Her mother did the same by bold Gunther. Joyfully
1667 they walked away with the heroes. The host walked with Gernot into a spacious hall. Knights and ladies sat down there. Then the order was quickly given for good wine to be poured for the guests. Never,
1668 indeed, can heroes have been treated better!

Rüedeger's daughter was looked upon with amorous glances, she being so well-favoured. Worthy knights in great numbers made love to her in their minds. She did indeed deserve it well—she was high-
1669 spirited. They might think what they liked, but nothing of that kind could happen. Many glances were cast back and forth at the maidens

and ladies who sat in ample numbers there. The noble fiddler bore the host goodwill. 1670

According to custom, they separated there. The knights and ladies went to different quarters. Then they set up the tables in the spacious hall, where afterwards the guests, those strangers, were served in splendid fashion. To honour the guests the noble margravine 1671 went to table. She left her daughter among the maidens then, in her rightful place. The guests saw nothing of her, much to their disappointment. When they had all drunk and eaten, the fair ladies 1672 were shown back into the hall. Ribald talk* was given free rein there. Volker, that bold and gallant knight, said much in that vein. 1673

Then the noble minstrel spoke openly: 'Wealthy margrave, God has acted most graciously by you, for he has given you a wife so truly fair, and a life so full of delights. If I were a prince,' said the minstrel, 1674 'and if I were to wear a crown, I would wish to have your fair daughter for my wife—that would be my heart's desire. She is lovely to look at, noble and gracious.' 1675

The margrave replied: 'How might it be that a king should ever desire my dear daughter? We are in exile here, both I and my wife. How can her great beauty help the good damsel?' 1676

Courteous Gernot answered him: 'If I were to have a beloved to meet with my wishes, then I would forever rejoice in such a wife.'

Hagen responded most graciously then: 'Now my lord Giselher 1677 ought to take a wife. The margravine has such high-born kinsfolk that we would gladly serve her, I and his vassals, if she were to wear a crown over in Burgundy.' 1678

Rüedeger thought very well of these words, as did Gotelint; their hearts were overjoyed. They put it to the heroes that noble Giselher should take her as a wife, as well befitted a king. If anything is fated 1679 to come about, who can forestall it? They asked the damsel to come to court. Then they vowed to give Giselher the charming lady. He, for his part, swore that he would love the lovely maiden. They 1680 conferred castles and land upon the damsel. The noble king's hand confirmed that with oaths there, as also did Lord Gernot, and it was done.

Then the margrave said: 'Since I have no castles, I shall always be 1681 beholden to you in good faith. I will give, along with my daughter, silver and gold—as much as a hundred packhorses can best carry—so that the hero's kinsmen may be well contented, as honour demands.' 1682

Then they were both told to stand in a ring, according to custom. Great numbers of youths stood opposite her, in joyful spirits. Their minds were occupied with such matters as the young and foolish like
1683 to think of still. Then they put the question to the lovely maiden—did she wish to have the warrior? She was somewhat sad, yet resolved to take the gallant knight. She was embarrassed by the question, as
1684 many maidens have been. Her father Rüedeger advised her to say yes, and that she would gladly accept him. Noble Giselher was quick to approach her then and embrace her with his white hands (though she
1685 was to have small joy of him).

Then the margrave said: 'You noble, mighty kings, when you ride back home to Burgundy I'll give you my daughter, as is the custom,
1686 so that you can take her with you.' They then took a vow on that.

All the clamour that was to be heard there had to cease then. The damsels were told to go to their chamber, and the guests to sleep and rest till daybreak. Then food was prepared for them; the host tended
1687 them with a good grace. When they had eaten they wanted to depart for Hungary. 'I'll have none of that!' said the most noble host. 'You
1688 must stay here longer, for seldom have I had such dear guests here.'

Dancwart answered: 'That cannot be. Where would you find the food, the bread, and also the wine, to put up so many warriors tonight?'

1689 When the host heard that, he said: 'Let such words be. My most dear lords, you must not refuse me. Indeed, I would give you food for a fortnight, along with all the company that has come here with you.
1690 King Etzel has taken very little away from me as yet.'

Hard though they tried to resist, they had to stay there until the fourth morning. The host's generosity did such deeds then that it was spoken of far and wide. He gave both horses and garments to his
1691 guests.

Now it could be delayed no longer, but they had to depart. Bold Rüedeger's generosity was unstinting. He denied nothing to anyone
1692 who wished to accept his gifts—none could quarrel with that. Their noble retinue led many palfreys, saddled, up to the gate. They were then joined out there by many of the foreign warriors. They bore
1693 their shields in their hands, for they wanted to ride into Etzel's land.

The host then offered his gifts in all directions before the noble guests left his hall. He knew how to practise generosity and live in high honour.

He had given his fair daughter to Giselher. Then he gave to 1694
Gunther, that renowned hero, a gift that the noble, mighty king
was honoured to bear, seldom as he accepted gifts—a suit of mail.
Gunther then bowed to noble Rüedeger's hand in recognition. Next 1695
he gave to Gernot a sword of ample worth, which he was later to
wield most splendily in battle. The margrave's wife did not begrudge
him that gift, although worthy Rüedeger was afterwards to lose his
life by it. 1696

Since the king had accepted gifts,* Gotelint offered Hagen gifts in
friendship, as well became her, so that he also should not depart for
the festivity without being provided for by her, but he refused the
offer then. 'Of all I have ever seen,' said Hagen then, 'I'd desire to 1697
carry nothing away with me from here except that shield on that wall
there. I would gladly take that with me into Etzel's land.' 1698

When the margravine heard Hagen's words, it reminded her of
her sorrow. Weeping became her. She harboured deep thoughts of
Nuodunc's death.* Witege had slain him, which is why she grieved
with such anguish. She said to the knight: 'I will give you that shield. 1699
Would God in Heaven that he were still alive who once bore it in his
hands! He lay dead in battle. I must needs weep over him forever,
poor woman that I am.' The noble margravine stood up from her 1700
chair. With her white hands she took hold of the shield. The lady
carried it to Hagen. He took it into his hands. That gift was honour-
ably bestowed upon the warrior. A scabbard of bright fur, with noble 1701
gems, lay over its sheen—no day ever shone upon a better shield! If
anyone had wished to purchase it, it would have cost a good thousand
marks. 1702

Hagen then ordered that the shield be carried away. Then Dancwart
came to court. The margrave's daughter gave him many sumptuous
garments, which he later wore in great splendour among the Huns. 1703
None of the gifts that they had accepted would have been taken into
their hands but for love of the host, who treated them so splendidly.
(In time to come they grew so hostile to him that they had no choice
but to slay him.) 1704

Bold Volker, with his fiddle, walked over and stood courteously
before Gotelint. He fiddled sweet melodies and sang her his songs.
Thus he took his leave when he departed from Pöchlarn. The mar- 1705
gravine ordered that a chest be brought to her. You may now hear tell
of gifts given in friendship. She took twelve torques out and braced

them onto his arm. 'You must take these with you into Etzel's land, and, as a favour to me, wear them at court, so that when you return people may talk of what service you have rendered me at the festivity there.' In time to come he duly carried out the lady's wishes.

Then the host said to his guests: 'To make your journey easier, I myself will lead you and order that you be well protected, so that no one may harm you on the road.' Then his packs were quickly loaded onto the horses. The host, together with five hundred men, was well equipped with horses and garments. All those he took with him, in the highest of spirits, to the festivity. (Not a single one of them was to come back alive to Pöchlarn.)

With a loving kiss the host then departed, as also did Giselher, as his virtue advised him. With embraces they caressed fair women. (In time to come damsels in great numbers were to weep over that.) The windows were opened on all sides then. The host, along with his men, wanted to go to the horses. I believe their hearts told them of the great sorrows ahead. Many a lady and many a comely maid wept there. Plenty of them grieved over dear friends whom they never again beheld in Pöchlarn. Yet they rode in good spirits down along the shore, downstream alongside the Danube, over into Hungary.

Then that most gallant knight, noble Rüedeger, said to the Burgundians: 'We should make no secret of our tidings, that we are going to the Huns. King Etzel has never heard such happy news.'

Swiftly the messenger rode downstream through Austria. People everywhere were told that the heroes from Worms on the Rhine were coming. The king's retinue could not be better pleased. The messengers hastened ahead with the tidings that the Nibelungs had arrived in Hungary.

'You must give them a good welcome, Kriemhilt, my lady. It is a high honour for you that your most dear brothers are coming here.'

Lady Kriemhilt stood at a window. She was on the lookout for her kinsmen, as a friend still is for friends. She saw many a man from her father's land. The king also heard the tidings. He smiled with pleasure.

'Now I rejoice in my happiness!' said Kriemhilt. 'My kinsmen bring here new shields in great numbers, and bright hauberks. Anyone who wants to take my gold must think on my sorrows, and I will always hold him dear!'

TWENTY-EIGHTH ADVENTURE

HOW THE BURGUNDIANS ARRIVED AMONG THE HUNS

WHEN the Burgundians arrived in the land, old Hildebrant of Bern* came to hear of it. He told his lord of it—it troubled him greatly. He asked him to give a warm welcome to the bold and gallant knights. 1718
Bold Wolfhart* ordered that the chargers be brought there. Strong knights in great numbers rode with Dietrich then, as he set out to greet them on the plain. They had pitched great numbers of splendid pavilions there. 1719

When Hagen of Tronege saw them riding from afar, he spoke courteously to his lords: 'Now you bold warriors must get up from your seats and go to meet those who want to welcome you there. 1720
Here comes a company which is well known to me. They are knights of great boldness from the land of the Amelungs, who are led by the Lord of Bern; they are men of high spirits. Do not disdain any homage they pay you.' 1721

Then many knights and squires dismounted alongside Dietrich—as was only right and proper. They walked over to the strangers, to meet the heroes. They greeted the men from Burgundy in friendship. 1722

When Lord Dietrich saw them coming towards him—here you may gladly hear what the knight then said to Uote's sons—he was sorry they had made this journey. He believed that Rüedeger knew the reason, that he'd told them about it. 'Welcome, you lords, 1723
Gunther and Giselher, Gernot and Hagen, and you also, Sir Volker, and valiant Dancwart! Do you not know? Kriemhilt still weeps sorely for the hero of the land of the Nibelungs.' 1724

'She may well weep for a long time yet,' replied Hagen. 'He has lain slain for many a long year. She ought to cherish the King of the Huns now. Sivrit will not come back—he was buried long ago.' 1725

'Let us leave Sivrit's wounds aside now—as long as Lady Kriemhilt lives, harm may yet happen!'—so spoke Lord Dietrich of Bern. 'Be on your guard against that, hope of the Nibelungs!' 1726

'Why should I be on my guard?' said the proud king. 'Etzel sent messengers to us—what need have I to question further?—inviting us to ride to him, here into this land. My sister Kriemhilt has also sent us many messages.' 1727

'I can give you good counsel,' Hagen went on to say. 'Ask Lord Dietrich and his worthy heroes to tell you more now and inform you
1728 of Lady Kriemhilt's state of mind.'

Then the three mighty powerful kings, Gunther and Gernot, and also Lord Dietrich, went to hold private talks. 'Now tell us, most noble and worthy knight of Bern, what you know of the queen's state
1729 of mind.'

The overlord of Bern replied: 'What more am I to say to you? Every morning I hear Etzel's wife weeping and lamenting grievously
1730 to Almighty God in Heaven over the death of mighty Sivrit.'

'What we have heard changes nothing,' said valiant Volker the fiddler. 'We must ride to court and must see for ourselves what will
1731 happen to us bold knights there among the Huns.'

The bold Burgundians rode to court. They arrived in splendour, according to the custom of their land. Great numbers of bold men among the Huns there were curious to see what Hagen of Tronege
1732 looked like, for tidings were told—he had heard such talk in plenty—that he had slain Sivrit of the Netherlands, strongest of all warriors, Kriemhilt's husband. Thus many questions were put at court con-
1733 cerning Hagen. The hero was in all truth well-grown, broad-chested; his hair was mixed with grey. His legs were long and his countenance
1734 fearsome. His gait was proud.

Then they ordered that lodgings be found for the men of Burgundy. Gunther's retinue were given separate lodgings. That was on the advice of the queen, who bore him great enmity. (Thus it came
1735 about that they afterwards slew the squires in the lodgings.) Dancwart, Hagen's brother, was the marshal. King Gunther commended his retinue to his care, telling him to tend them well and give them
1736 ample provisions. The hero of Burgundy bore them all goodwill.

Fair Kriemhilt, with her retinue, walked over in treacherous mood to welcome the Nibelungs. She kissed Giselher and took him by the
1737 hand. Hagen of Tronege saw that—he buckled his helmet more firmly.

'After such a greeting as that,' said Hagen then, 'bold knights may have second thoughts. The kings and their vassals are being greeted
1738 separately. It was no good journey that we have made to this festivity.'

Kriemhilt said: 'Now let those welcome you who are glad to see you. I do not greet you because of any friendship I feel towards you. Tell me what you bring me from Worms on the Rhine that should
1739 make me give you such a fine welcome.'

'If I had known', replied Hagen, 'that knights ought to bring you gifts, I am wealthy enough, I suppose, and ought to have thought of bringing my gifts here to you in this land.' 1740

'Now let me know more of this—the hoard of the Nibelungs: where have you put it? It was after all my property, as you well know. You ought to have brought that to me, into Etzel's land.' 1741

'In truth, my lady Kriemhilt, it is many a day since I last had charge of the hoard of the Nibelungs. My lords ordered that it be sunk in the Rhine. It will have to stay there till the end of time, for certain.' 1742

Then the queen said: 'I thought as much. You have brought very little of it as yet here to this land, even though it was my own property and I once had charge of it. That causes me misery many a day.' 1743

'The devil of a lot will I bring you!' answered Hagen. 'I have so much to carry with my shield and my breast-plate. My helmet shines bright. It is not to you that I bring this sword* in my hand.' 1744

Then the queen said to the warriors all around: 'No weapons are to be taken into the hall. You heroes, you must surrender them to me. I'll have them put in safe-keeping.'

'In truth,' replied Hagen, 'that will never be! I do not desire such 1745 honour, munificent prince's spouse, that you should carry my shield and other weapons of mine to the lodgings—you are a queen. My father taught me no such manners. I will be my own chamberlain.' 1746

'Alas for my sorrows!' said Lady Kriemhilt then. 'Why will my brother and Hagen not let their shields be put in safe-keeping? They have been warned. If I knew who had done that, he would meet with death.' 1747

Angrily, Prince Dietrich answered her: 'It is I who have warned the noble, mighty kings, and bold Hagen, the Burgundians' vassal. Go to, she-devil, make me pay for it!' 1748

Etzel's wife was deeply ashamed at that. She was bitterly afraid of Dietrich. She walked quickly away from him then, not speaking, but casting fierce looks at her foes. 1749

Two knights clasped hands then—the one was Sir Dietrich, the other Hagen. The gallant warrior said courteously: 'I truly regret your arrival among the Huns, now that the queen has spoken such 1750 words.' Hagen of Tronege replied: 'All may yet turn out well.' Thus the two bold men talked among themselves.

King Etzel saw this and asked questions about it. 'I would gladly 1751 know', said the mighty king, 'who that warrior might be whom

Sir Dietrich is welcoming there in such friendly fashion. He is a man of high spirits. No matter who his father might be, he may well be a
1752 worthy hero.'

One of Kriemhilt's men answered the king: 'He is born of Tronege; his father was called Aldrian. No matter how blithely he bears himself here, he is a grim man. I will give you good proof that I have told
1753 no lie.'

'How am I to tell that he is so fearsome?' As yet Etzel knew nothing of the great numbers of evil plots that the queen was afterwards to hatch against her kinsmen, letting none of them depart from the
1754 Huns alive. 'I knew Aldrian well—he was my vassal. He won praise and much honour alongside me here. I made him a knight and gave
1755 him my gold. Loyal Helche held him very dear. Hence I know all about Hagen. Two gallant boys became my hostages, he and Walther of Spain. They grew to manhood here. I sent Hagen back to his
1756 homeland. Walther eloped with Hiltegunt.'*

He pondered over things that had happened long ago. He had recognized now his friend from Tronege, who, in his youth, had offered him great service. Now, in Etzel's old age, Hagen was to bring about
1757 the death of great numbers of his dear friends.

TWENTY-NINTH ADVENTURE

HOW KRIEMHILT REBUKED HAGEN AND HOW HE DID NOT STAND UP TO GREET HER

THEN the two renowned warriors, Hagen of Tronege and Sir Dietrich, parted. Next Gunther's vassal looked over his shoulder for a
1758 companion-in-arms—he swiftly gained one. He saw Volker standing alongside Giselher then. He asked the cunning fiddler to walk with him, for he was well acquainted with his grim cast of mind—he was
1759 in every respect a bold and worthy knight. They left their lords still standing in the courtyard. Those two were seen to walk off alone, far across the courtyard towards a spacious palace. Those excellent
1760 knights feared no one's wrath. They sat down on a bench outside the castle, facing a hall—it belonged to Kriemhilt. The noble garments that they wore shone from them then. Plenty who saw them would
1761 gladly have made their acquaintance.

The Huns gaped at the haughty heroes as if they were wild beasts. Etzel's wife also observed them through a window. Fair Kriemhilt was troubled again by this. It reminded her of her sorrows—she 1762
began to weep. Etzel's men wondered greatly as to what had so suddenly troubled her mind. She said: 'It is Hagen, you bold and worthy heroes.' 1763

They said to the lady: 'How has this happened? For we saw you happy just now. No one was ever so bold that if he's done you wrong, if you tell us to avenge it, it'll cost him his life.' 1764

'I would always seek to reward anyone who would avenge my wrongs. All that he desired, I would be willing to give him. I kneel at your feet,' said the king's wife. 'Avenge me on Hagen, and let his life be lost!' 1765

Sixty bold men swiftly armed themselves then. To carry out Kriemhilt's wishes they wanted to go over and slay Hagen, that valiant man, and also the fiddler—that was the plot they laid. When 1766
the queen saw that their company was so small, she spoke grimly to the heroes: 'You must abandon what you have in mind. You can never take on Hagen with such small numbers. No matter how strong 1767
and how bold Hagen of Tronege is, he who sits alongside him there is far stronger, Volker the fiddler—he is an evil foe. You must not take on those heroes so lightly.' 1768

When they heard those words they armed themselves in greater numbers, four hundred bold warriors. The proud queen was fully bent on doing her foes harm. (That caused great anguish to the knights thereafter.) When she saw that her company was well armed, 1769
the queen addressed the bold warriors: 'Wait a while now—halt here. I want to walk over to my foes, wearing my crown. And hear my 1770
rebuke, hear what wrongs Hagen of Tronege, Gunther's vassal, has done me. I know that he is so haughty that he will not deny anything of it before me. That is why I, for my part, do not care what befalls him in consequence.' 1771

Then the fiddler, that bold minstrel, saw the noble queen go down a staircase from a hall. When valiant Volker beheld that, he said to his companion-in-arms: 'See now, friend Hagen, where she approaches, 1772
she who has treacherously invited us into this land. I've never beheld so many men alongside a king's wife, bearing swords in their hands, walking so warlike. Do you know, friend Hagen, if she bears you en- 1773
mity? In that case I would counsel you to be all the more on your guard,

to preserve your life and honour. It seems a good idea to me, the
1774 way I see it, for they are in an angry mood. Some of them, too, are so broad-chested, that anyone who is on his guard should brook no delay. I believe that beneath their silk* they wear bright breast-plates.
1775 Whom they have in mind to attack I cannot tell.'

Angrily, bold Hagen replied: 'I well know that all this is aimed at me, that that is why they bear bright swords in their hands. Fighting
1776 against those, I might yet ride back to Burgundy. Now tell me, friend Volker, will you stand by me if Kriemhilt's men want to do battle with me? Let me hear your answer, dear as I am to you. I'll repay you
1777 loyally by my constant service.'

'Rest assured, I'll help you,' said the minstrel. 'Even if I saw King Etzel himself advance upon us with all his warriors, for as long as
1778 I live I'll help you and not budge a foot from your side out of fear.'

'Now God in Heaven reward you, most noble Volker! If they do battle against me, whom else do I need? Since you will help me, as
1779 I have heard, those warriors must watch their step!'

'Now let us stand up from the seat,' said the minstrel. 'She is a queen, and let her walk past. Let us offer her that honour—she is of
1780 noble birth. Each of us will also be honoured by that.'

'No, by the love you bear me!' replied Hagen. 'Then these knights would think that I did it out of fear, if I were to walk away from here.
1781 I will never stand up from the seat for any of them! It befits us both better, indeed, to omit any such greeting. Why should I honour one who is my foe? I shall never do so, as long as I live. Nor do I care
1782 about what wrath Etzel's wife bears me.'

Haughty Hagen laid a shining sword across his legs, from whose pommel shone a brilliant jasper, greener than grass. Kriemhilt could
1783 clearly see that it was Sivrit's sword. When she recognized it, sadness overcame her. Its hilt was golden, the scabbard a red braid. It reminded her of her sorrows—she began to weep. I believe that was
1784 why bold Hagen had done this. Brave Volker pulled closer to him on the bench a mighty fiddler's bow, huge and long, like a sword, very
1785 sharp and broad. The two gallant knights sat there then, unafraid. The two bold men thought so highly of themselves that they did not want to stand up from the seat for fear of anyone. The noble queen
1786 therefore walked down to them and offered them a hostile greeting.

She said: 'Now tell me, Sir Hagen, who has sent for you, that you dare ride here into this land, knowing full well what wrong you

have done me? If you were wise, you should rightly have remained at home.' 1787

'No one sent for me,' Hagen replied. 'Three knights were invited here to this land. They are my lords and I am their vassal. Seldom have I stayed behind when they have made a journey to a foreign court.' 1788

She said: 'Tell me more now: why did you go about earning my enmity? You slew Sivrit, my dear husband. That has given me ample reason to weep until the end of my days.' 1789

Hagen said: 'What of that now? Enough has been said of that. I'm that Hagen who slew Sivrit, that man of mettle. How dearly he paid for Lady Kriemhilt having insulted fair Prünhilt! There is no denying 1790 it, mighty queen. I bear the guilt for it all, for the harm and the loss.* Avenge it now, whoever wants to do so, be it woman or man. I would be lying to you if I did not admit that I have done you great harm.' 1791

She said: 'Only hear now, you warriors, how he does not deny all the wrongs he has done me! I care nothing about whatever befalls him in consequence, you men of Etzel!'

The haughty knights looked one another in the face. If anyone 1792 were to commence battle there, it would have ensued that those two companions would be granted honour, for they had done great deeds in battle time and again. Those who had presumed to take them on had no choice but to desist out of fear. 1793

Then one of the warriors said: 'Why do you look at me? What I vowed before I will abandon now, not wanting to lose my life for the sake of anyone's gifts. King Etzel's wife wants to lead us to our doom!' 1794

Then another added: 'I am of the same mind. Even if someone gave me towers of good red gold, I would not take on that fiddler, so fierce are the looks I have seen him cast. Moreover, I have known 1795 Hagen since the days of his youth. There is no need to tell me much about that warrior. I have seen him in twenty-two battles, which brought heart's grief to great numbers of ladies. He and the man of 1796 Spain* trod many a path together when they fought many battles with Etzel here, to the honour of the king—much of that happened here. Hagen must justly be granted honour on that account. In those days 1797 the warrior was only a child in years. Those who were young then, how grey they are now! Now he has his wits about him and is a grim man. Moreover, he carries Balmunc, which he won most evilly.' 1798

They parted there without anyone doing battle. The queen was heartily sorry for that. The heroes turned away—they feared death at
1799 the fiddler's hands. To be sure, they had good reason to do so.

Then the fiddler said: 'We have clearly seen that we have found enemies here, as we heard tell before. We must go to court, to the
1800 kings—then no one will dare attack our lord in battle.'

How often does a man fail to do many things out of fear, when a friend stands in friendship alongside a friend,* and if a man's wise, he won't go ahead. Good sense will guard well against harm befalling
1801 many a man.

'I'll take your advice now,' said Hagen then. They walked over to where they found the gallant knights standing in the courtyard, being given a great welcome.

1802 Valiant Volker spoke loudly to his lords: 'How long do you want to stand here, letting men jostle you?* You must go to court and hear what the king intends.'

Then those bold and worthy heroes were seen to pair off with
1803 companions. The Prince of Bern took most mighty Gunther of Burgundy by the hand. Irnfrit took valiant Gernot. Rüedeger was seen
1804 to walk to court with Giselher. No matter how they paired themselves off and walked to court, Volker and Hagen never parted, not until they met their end in battle. (Noble ladies were to weep grievously over that
1805 thereafter.) They then saw a thousand bold men of their noble company walk to court with the kings, as well as sixty warriors who had
1806 gone there with them. Bold Hagen had brought those from his land.

Hawart, and also Irinc, two excellent warriors, were seen to walk in company with the kings. Dancwart and Wolfhart, a knight of high
1807 worth, were seen to excel in courtesy above all others.

When the overlord of the Rhine went into the palace, mighty Etzel waited no longer, but leapt from his seat when he saw him coming.
1808 No king ever gave such a splendid greeting. 'Welcome, Sir Gunther, and also Sir Gernot, and your brother Giselher. I was at pains to send you my loyal homage to Worms on the Rhine, and I welcome all your
1809 company. My lady and I now bid a warm welcome to this land to you two knights also, valiant Volker and Hagen. She sent many messen-
1810 gers to you by the Rhine.'

Hagen of Tronege replied: 'I have heard much of that. If I had not come here to the Huns for my lords' sake, I would have ridden into the land in order to do you honour.'

Then that most noble host took his dear guests by the hand. 1811
He took them to the seat where he himself sat. They then poured out mead, mulberry juice, and wine in great golden goblets for the guests, taking great pains over this, and bade the foreigners be most welcome. 1812

Then King Etzel said: 'I tell you willingly, no greater joy could befall me in this world than to welcome you heroes who have come to me here. The queen will be robbed of much sadness by this. I wonder greatly what wrong I have done you, now that I have gained so many most noble guests, that you never deigned to come to my lands before. Now that I have seen you, it gives me joy.' 1813 1814

Rüedeger, that high-spirited knight, answered: 'You may well be glad to see them. My lady's kinsmen know how to practise loyalty so splendidly. They bring gallant knights in great numbers to your home.' 1815

It was on Midsummer's Eve that those lords had arrived at mighty Etzel's court. Seldom has such a noble greeting been heard of as that with which he welcomed the heroes. Now it was time to eat. The king went to table with them. No host ever sat in greater splendour 1816 alongside his guests. They gave them drink and food in plenty. All that they desired was at their disposal. They had heard great numbers of marvels told of those heroes. 1817

THIRTIETH ADVENTURE

HOW HAGEN AND VOLKER KEPT WATCH

THE day was at an end now, and night was nearing them. The way-weary warriors were wracked with anxiety, for they ought to rest and go to their beds. Hagen spoke up about this; the rest were quickly told. 1818

Gunther said to the host: 'God give you good-night. We want to go and sleep now, by your leave. If you command it we will come to you tomorrow morning.' Etzel parted most joyfully from his guests then. 1819

The guests were seen to be jostled on all sides. Bold Volker said to the Huns: 'How dare you tread on these warriors' toes? If you don't stop this, it'll cost you dear. I'll give one or two of you such a heavy 1820

blow with my fiddle that if they have any loyal friends, they may well weep over it. Why won't you give way to us warriors? It would be as well, I believe. All those present here are called knights, yet they are
1821 not all alike in mind.'

When the fiddler spoke so wrathfully, bold Hagen took a look behind him. He said: 'The bold minstrel is giving you good coun-
1822 sel. You heroes of Kriemhilt, you must go to your lodgings. I don't believe any of you will carry out what you have in mind. If you want to start anything, come to us tomorrow morning, and let us strangers have our rest tonight. That is the way I believe heroes with such
1823 warlike intentions have always acted.'

Then the guests were taken into a spacious hall. They found it equipped on all sides with sumptuous beds,* long and broad, for the warriors. (Lady Kriemhilt was plotting to cause them the greatest
1824 suffering that ever was.) They saw great numbers of finely worked cushions from Arras there, made of lustrous phellel-silk, and many sheets of Arabian silk, the best that might be. Braids lay over them
1825 which yielded a splendid sheen. They saw great numbers of bedcovers, of ermine and black sable there, beneath which they were to find their rest that night, until bright day came. No king with his company ever
1826 lay down in such splendour.

'Alas for our night's lodgings here!' said young Giselher. 'And alas for my friends who have come with us! No matter how graciously my
1827 sister has treated us, I fear we must lie dead by her doing.'

'Now leave off your troubles,' said Hagen the warrior. 'I myself will take the watch tonight. I trust I can guard us well until day comes upon
1828 us. Have no fear whatever on that count. Then every man for himself!'

At that they all bowed to him and said their thanks. They went to the beds. It did not take long till the gallant men had lain down. Bold
1829 Hagen the hero began to don his armour.

Then the fiddler, Volker the warrior, said: 'If you will not spurn my offer, Hagen, I would gladly stand guard with you tonight, until tomorrow morning.'

1830 The hero thanked Volker with great affection then: 'Now may God in Heaven reward you, dearest Volker! In all my troubles, I'd want no one other than you alone, no matter where I might be hard pressed.
1831 I shall repay it well unless death forestalls me.'

Then they both donned their bright armour. Each of them took his shield in his hands, and they walked out of the house to stand

before the door. They stood guard then over the guests—that was loyally done. Bold Volker leant his good shield against the wall of the 1832
hall. He went back inside then and took up his fiddle. Then he served his friends as befitted that hero. He sat down on the stone threshold 1833
of the hall. No fiddler was ever bolder. When his strings' melodies sounded so sweetly, the proud foreigners said their thanks to Volker. 1834
Then his strings sounded so loud that all the hall resounded. His courage and his skill were both great. He started to fiddle ever more sweetly and softly—he put to sleep great numbers of anxious men as they lay on the beds. Once they had fallen asleep and he was 1835
certain of it, the knight took up his shield again and went out of the chamber to stand before the doors and guard the foreigners against Kriemhilt's men. 1836

Well into the middle of the night—I don't know if it happened any earlier—bold Volker saw a helmet shining from a window far off. Kriemhilt's men would gladly have done the guests harm. Then 1837
the fiddler said: 'Friend Hagen, it befits us to bear these troubles together. I see armed men standing outside the hall. The way I see it, I think they want to attack us.' 1838

'Then be silent,' replied Hagen. 'Let them come closer to us. Before they are aware of us, we two will have knocked helmets askew with our swords here. They will be sent back to Kriemhilt in a bad way.' 1839

One of the Huns' warriors soon spotted that the door was guarded. How quick he was to speak then! 'What we had in mind cannot be carried out. I see the fiddler standing guard. He wears on his head a 1840
shining helmet, bright and hard, stout and intact. His chainmail also burns like fire. Hagen is standing next to him—the guests are well guarded!' 1841

They turned back at once. When Volker saw that, he spoke wrathfully to his companion: 'Now let me go out from the hall to those warriors. I want to ask Lady Kriemhilt's men for tidings.' 1842

'No, by the love you bear me,' replied Hagen. 'If you walk away from the hall, those bold knights might perhaps bring you into such peril with their swords that I would have to come to your aid, even if it meant the death of all my kinsmen. If we both entered battle then, 1843
some three or four of them would in no time at all leap towards the hall and wreak such harm on our sleepers as would never cease to be mourned over.' 1844

Then Volker answered: 'Well, let us in any case make it clear to them that I have seen them, so that Kriemhilt's men can make no
1845 denial of the treachery they would gladly have done.'

Volker called out to them at once: 'Why do you walk about thus armed, you bold knights? Do you want to ride out robbing, you men of Kriemhilt? You shall have me and my companion-in-arms to help
1846 you in that!'

No one answered him. He was in an angry mood: 'Fie on you, you base cowards!' said the worthy hero. 'Would you have murdered us in our sleep? Seldom has that been inflicted upon such worthy
1848 heroes!'

Then the queen was told in full that her messengers had achieved nothing. She had good reason to be grieved. She then resorted to a different plan—she was in a savage mood. (Bold and worthy heroes
1848 were to die in consequence.)

THIRTY-FIRST ADVENTURE

HOW THEY WENT TO CHURCH

'My chainmail is getting so cold,' said Volker. 'I doubt if this night will last us much longer now. I can tell by the air that it will very soon be day.'

1849 Then they woke the many who still lay sleeping. The bright morning then shone towards the guests, into the hall. Hagen walked about waking the knights on all sides, asking them if they wanted go to the minster for mass. Many bells began to toll according to Christian
1850 custom. They sang in different ways there, as was clearly apparent—Christians and heathens were not in unison.

Gunther's men then wanted to go to church. They had all risen
1851 from the beds. Then the warriors laced themselves into such fine garments that no heroes ever brought better clothes into any king's land. That irked Hagen. He said: 'You heroes ought to wear other
1852 clothing here. Enough of you have no doubt heard the tidings. Instead of roses, bear swords in your hands now; instead of hats adorned with gems, wear bright, sturdy helmets, now that we are well aware
1853 of evil Kriemhilt's intent. We must do battle today, I tell you. Instead of silken shifts you must wear hauberks, and instead of costly cloaks

good, broad shields, so that if anyone is angry at you, you are ready for the fray. My dear lords, and my kinsmen and vassals, you must 1854
go to church most willingly and lament to Almighty God your fear-
ful peril, in certain knowledge that death is nearing us. Nor should 1855
you forget what wrongs you have done, and you must stand dutifully before God there. I warn you, most proud warriors, that unless God in Heaven wills it, you will never hear mass again.' 1856

Thus the princes and their vassals walked to the minster. In the sacred precinct bold Hagen ordered them to halt and stay close together. He said: 'No one yet knows what will happen to us at the hands of the Huns. Lay your shields at your feet, my friends, and if 1857
anyone offers you a mean greeting, pay him back with deep, mortal wounds—that is Hagen's counsel. Let it be said of you that you have acquitted yourselves with renown.' 1858

Volker and Hagen, those two, walked towards the spacious minster. They did so because they wanted it to be known that the king's wife might have to jostle past them. Their mood was most grim indeed. 1859

Then the lord of that land, and also his fair wife, arrived. She was attired in costly garments, as were the courageous warriors people saw riding alongside her. Kriemhilt's companies then caused the dust to fly high. 1860

When the mighty king saw that the kings and their company were thus armed, how quick he was to speak! 'How is it that I see my friends walking beneath helmets? By my loyalty, I am sorry if anyone has done them any harm. I will gladly make amends to them in whatever 1861
way they think right, if anyone has offended their hearts and minds. I shall make them well aware that I am deeply sorry for it. No matter what they command of me, I am ready and willing to do it all.' 1862

Hagen answered: 'No one has done us any wrong. It is my lords' custom to walk armed at all festivities for fully three days. If anyone did us any wrong here, we would tell Etzel of it.' 1863

Kriemhilt heard clearly what Hagen had then said. What hostile looks she cast at him! She did not want, however, to betray what was the custom of her land, long though she had been acquainted with it over there in Burgundy. No matter how grim and how hostile she 1864
was towards them, if anyone had told Etzel the truth of the matter he would have prevented what was to happen there afterwards. In their great pride none of them told him of it. 1865

A huge crowd then walked away alongside the queen. Volker and Hagen, those two, would not stand an inch further off. That irked
1866 the Huns. They had no choice but to jostle with the gallant heroes. Etzel's chamberlains thought ill of that. They would have aroused the warriors' wrath then, but dared not do so in the presence of the
1867 proud king. There was a great deal of jostling, but nothing further.

After they had served God and they wanted to leave, great numbers of the Huns quickly went over to their horses. There was many a fair maiden present with Kriemhilt then. Some seven thousand
1868 knights rode alongside the queen. Kriemhilt took her seat with her ladies at the windows, next to mighty Etzel; that gave him great pleasure. They wanted to watch the gallant heroes ride. Ah what foreign
1869 warriors rode before them in the courtyard!

By then the marshal, valiant Dancwart, had also arrived with the squires; he had gathered about him his lord's retinue from Burgundy.
1870 The bold Nibelungs found their horses well saddled for them. When the kings, and also their vassals, came to their horses, mighty Volker advised that they should hold a bohort according to their land's
1871 custom. The heroes then rode in great splendour. What the hero had advised met with no disapproval. The bohort and the clamour both grew great. Men in great numbers came into the spacious courtyard.
1872 Etzel and Kriemhilt were watching this.

Six hundred knights from among Dietrich's warriors came to the bohort to meet the guests. They wanted to have sport with the Burgundians. If Dietrich had granted them permission, they would
1873 gladly have done so. Ah, what worthy warriors rode after them there! Lord Dietrich was told of this. He forbade them to have any sport
1874 with Gunther's men. He feared for his men, and rightly so.

After those men of Bern had departed, five hundred of Rüedeger's men from Pöchlarn came riding up to the palace, beneath their shields. The margrave would have liked them to have refrained from
1875 this. Then, wisely, he rode through the company to them and said to his warriors that they must be aware that Gunther's men were in angry mood—if they were to abandon the bohort, it would meet with
1876 his approval.

When those gallant heroes had parted from the Burgundians, the men of Thuringia approached, so we are told, and some thousand bold men of Denmark. Many splinters were seen to fly up into the air as the
1877 jousts met. Irnfrit and Hawart rode into the bohort. The men from

the Rhine had been proudly waiting for them. They offered many a joust to the men of Thuringia. Thus great numbers of splendid rims were riddled with holes. 1878

Then Lord Blœdelin arrived with three thousand men. Etzel and Kriemhilt observed him clearly, for these deeds of chivalry were taking place before them both. The queen was glad to see this, hoping that harm would befall the Burgundians. Schrutan and Gibeche* 1879 rode to the bohort, as did Ramunc and Hornboge,* according to Hunnish customs. They halted opposite the heroes of Burgundy. The shafts twirled high over the walls of the king's hall. 1880

No matter what anyone did there, it was no more than clamour. The palace and the great hall resounded loudly with the clash of the shields of Gunther's men. His retinue won renown and great honour. 1881 Their sport was so intense and great then that the shining sweat flowed through the caparisons* of the good chargers that the heroes rode. They put the Huns to the test, bearing themselves most proudly. 1882

Then Volker the minstrel, that bold warrior, said: 'I believe these warriors daren't take us on. I always heard tell that they bore us enmity. No better opportunity could ever present itself than now. 1883 Have our warhorses led to the lodgings,' Volker went on, 'and let us ride again towards evening, when the time is ripe. What if the queen gives the prize to the Burgundians?' 1884

Then they saw one who rode so swaggeringly there that none among all the Huns matched him. He might well have had a lady-love at that time. He rode as well-attired as a noble knight's bride. 1885

At that Volker spoke again: 'How can I resist? That ladies' pet must have a thrashing.* No one can prevent it—it will cost him his life! I don't care if it angers King Etzel's wife.' 1886

'No, by the love you bear me,' said the king at once. 'The people will hold us to blame if we attack them. Let the Huns start things—that would be far more fitting.'

Still King Etzel sat by the queen. 1887

'I will add to the bohort's numbers,' said Hagen then. 'Let the ladies and the knights see how we can ride—that would be a noble deed. Otherwise, they won't give any praise to King Gunther's men.' 1888

Valiant Volker rode back into the bohort. That was to cause many a lady grievous sorrow thereafter. He thrust his lance through the wealthy Hun's body. Both maidens and women were seen to weep over that in time to come. Hard into the clash rode Hagen and his 1889

men, sixty of his knights, following the fiddler to where that sport
1890 had taken place. Etzel and Kriemhilt saw that clearly. The three kings did not want to leave their minstrel defenceless among their foes then. A thousand heroes rode with great skill there. They did
1891 just as they liked, with a most haughty bearing.

When the wealthy Hun had been slain, his kinsmen could be heard calling out and lamenting. All the household then asked: 'Who has
1892 done this?' 'It was the fiddler, Volker the bold minstrel!' At once the margrave of Hungary's kinsmen called out for swords and shields there. They would have slain Volker. The host hastened away from
1893 the window.

Then clamour arose on all sides amongst the people. The kings and their retinue dismounted in front of the palace. The Burgundians thrust their chargers back.* Then King Etzel came up—that lord set
1894 about ending the dispute. He found one of the Hun's kinsmen standing by him. He tore a mighty sword out of his hand. Then he drove them all back, for he was greatly angered: 'How should I have for-
1895 feited the service I have rendered these heroes if you had slain this minstrel in my presence!' said King Etzel. 'That would be an ill deed. I clearly saw him riding when he thrust his lance through the Hun,
1896 and that it was not his fault—it happened because he stumbled. You must leave my guests in peace!' He acted as their escort then. They led the chargers off to the lodgings. They had many squires who took
1897 pains to serve them in all things.

The host went into the palace with his friends. He allowed no more anger to arise there. Then they set up the tables; they brought the water* for them. The men of the Rhine had plenty of fierce foes
1898 there. It took a very long time until the lords had sat down.

Kriemhilt's troubles oppressed her all too sorely. She said: 'Prince of Bern, I seek your counsel, help, and favour. My affairs are in a
1899 parlous state.'

Hildebrant, that renowned warrior, answered her: 'If anyone is to slay the Nibelungs, I for one shall not be party to it, not for the sake of any treasure. It may cost someone dear. They are as yet unvan-
1900 quished, those bold, gallant knights.'

Then Sir Dietrich in his courtesy added: 'Let this request be, mighty queen. Your kinsmen have done me no such harm that I
1901 should wish to take on those bold warriors in battle. This request does you little honour, most noble prince's wife—that you plot the

death of your kinsmen. They came here into this land in good faith. Sivrit will remain unavenged by Dietrich's hands.' 1902

When she found no treachery in the man of Bern, she wasted no time in promising to Blœdelin a broad march which Nuodunc had possessed before. (Afterwards Dancwart slew him, so he had no memory of that gift!) She said: 'You must help me, Lord Blœdelin. 1903 Here in this castle are my foes who slew Sivrit, my dear husband. If anyone helps me avenge that, I shall always be indebted to him.' 1904

Blœdelin answered her as follows: 'Lady, you must know that I dare not, for fear of Etzel, plot any enmity, for he is very glad, lady, to see your kinsmen. If I were to harm them at all, the king would not forgive me for it.' 1905

'No, Lord Blœdelin, I shall always hold you dear! I'll give you silver and gold as a reward, and a fair maiden, Nuodunc's bride.* You will be glad to take your pleasure with that most lovely woman. I will 1906 give you all the land with its castles. Then, noble knight, you may forever live in joy, if you gain the march where Nuodunc resided. What I have vowed to you today, I'll carry out in good faith.' 1907

When Lord Blœdelin heard of that reward, knowing that the lady well befitted him because of her beauty, he thought to earn the lovely woman in battle. (The warrior was then to lose his life in that cause.) He said to the queen: 'Go back into the hall. Before anyone 1908 becomes aware of it, I shall cause a disturbance. Hagen must pay for the wrongs he has done you. I shall deliver King Gunther's vassal to you in bonds.' 1909

'Now arm yourselves,' said Blœdelin, 'all my men! We must go to the foes' lodgings. Etzel's wife will not spare me this! We heroes must all risk our lives in this cause!' 1910

After the queen had left Blœdelin bent on battle, she then went to table with Etzel the king, and also his vassals. She had laid grim plots against the guests. Now that the battle could not be brought about in 1911 any other way—Kriemhilt's old grief was buried deep in her heart—she ordered then that Etzel's son be brought to the table. How could a woman ever wreak more dreadful vengeance? Four of Etzel's men 1912 walked up at once; they carried Ortliep, the young king, over to the princes' table, where Hagen also sat. (The child was fated to die because of his murderous hostility.) 1913

When the mighty king beheld his son, he spoke graciously to his in-laws: 'See now, my friends, this is my only son, and that of

your sister also. This may bode well for all of you. If he takes after his kindred, he will be a bold man, wealthy and most noble, strong and well-favoured. If I live long enough, I'll give him twelve lands. Thus young Ortliep's hands may serve you well. Therefore, my dear friends, I would like to ask you, when you ride back to your land by the Rhine, to take your sister's son* with you, and act most kindly by the child. Bring him up honourably until he reaches manhood. If anyone has wronged you in the lands, he will help you avenge it, if he grows to be a man.'

Kriemhilt, King Etzel's wife, also heard those words.

'These knights ought to have every confidence in him,' said Hagen, 'if he grows to manhood, but the young king has such a doomed look about him—seldom shall I be seen to go to court for Ortliep's sake.'

The king glanced at Hagen—his words displeased him. Although the gallant prince said no more about it, it troubled his heart and weighed upon his mind. Hagen was not then in any mood for sport. What Hagen had said about the child hurt all the princes, as well as the king. They were dismayed that they had to tolerate it. (They knew nothing of what would afterwards befall them at the hands of that warrior.)

THIRTY-SECOND ADVENTURE

HOW DANCWART SLEW BLŒDELIN

All of Blœdelin's warriors were at the ready. Clad in a thousand hauberks, they headed off to where Dancwart sat with the squires at table. The greatest hostility ever known among heroes arose there. When Lord Blœdelin went up to the tables, Dancwart the marshal took pains to welcome him: 'Welcome to this house, my lord Blœdelin. I wonder greatly at this—what is amiss?'

'There's no need for you to greet me,' said Blœdelin, 'for my coming here must be the death of you, because of Hagen your brother, who slew Sivrit. You will pay for that at the hands of the Huns, as will plenty of other knights.'

'No, Lord Blœdelin!' replied Dancwart. 'In that case we would have good reason to regret this journey to a foreign court. I was a

small child when Sivrit lost his life.* I don't know what cause King Etzel's wife has to reproach me.' 1924

'I have nothing more to say to you. It was your kinsmen, Gunther and Hagen, who did the deed. Defend yourselves now, strangers to this land. You cannot survive! You must repay Kriemhilt with your deaths.' 1925

'You will not relent, then?' said Dancwart. 'In that case I regret pleading with you—it would have been better if I had saved my breath.' The bold, valiant warrior leapt away from the table. He drew a sharp sword, huge and long. Then he dealt Blœdelin such a fierce blow with his sword that his head at once lay at his feet. 'Let that be 1926 your dowry,' said Dancwart the warrior, 'for Nuodunc's bride, to whom you wanted to make love! They can marry her to another man 1927 tomorrow. If he wants the dowry, he will be dealt with in the same way!' A most loyal Hun had told him that the queen was plotting such grievous wrongs against them. 1928

When Blœdelin's men saw that their lord lay slain, they would no longer tolerate such treatment from the strangers. Swinging their swords high, they leapt up to the squires in a grim mood. Great numbers of them rued that in time to come. Loudly Dancwart then 1929 called out to all the retinue: 'You see clearly, noble squires, what is to come! Defend yourselves, strangers to this land! In truth, we have dire need to do so, although noble Kriemhilt sent us such a gracious invitation.' Those who had no swords reached beneath the benches 1930 and lifted great numbers of tall stools from amongst their feet. The squires of Burgundy were not going to take such treatment from the Huns. Many helmets were dented by heavy stools then! How grimly 1931 then the foreign lads defended themselves! They drove the armed men out of the hall, yet five hundred or more of them were left dead inside. The retinue then was red and wet with blood. 1932

Etzel's warriors were told of those awful tidings—it grieved them greatly—that Blœdelin and his men had been slain. Hagen's brother, together with the squires, had done that deed. Before the king could 1933 find out, two thousand or even more of the Huns, full of hostility, had made themselves ready. They made their way to the squires—there was no help for it—and left not a single one of the retinue alive. 1934 Those traitors led a mighty army up to the hall. The foreign squires defended themselves well. What did their bold courage avail them? They were inevitably slain. Grievous anguish arose soon after that. 1935

Now you may hear marvels and monstrous tidings! Nine thousand squires lay slain, along with twelve knights of Dancwart's men. He
1936 alone was to be seen still standing among his foes.

The din had died down, the clamour had ceased. Then Dancwart the warrior looked over his shoulder. He said: 'Alas for the friends
1937 whom I have lost! Now I fear I must stand alone among my foes.' The swords rained down upon the sole survivor. Heroes' wives in great numbers were to weep over that thereafter. He shifted his shield higher, lowering the grip. He made much chainmail wet with the
1938 blood that then flowed.

'Alas for these sorrows of mine!' said Aldrian's son. 'Make way now, you Hunnish warriors, let me get at the wind, so that the air may cool me, battle-weary as I am.' They saw the warrior stride
1939 in great splendour then. When the warrior, wearied by the battle, leapt out of the hall, what fresh swords rang out upon his helmet! Those who had not beheld what marvels his hands had wrought
1940 leapt to encounter the man of Burgundy. 'Would God, now,' said Dancwart, 'that I might have a messenger who could let my brother Hagen know that I stand in such peril before these warriors! He would help me away from here, or he would lie dead
1941 alongside me!'

Then the Hunnish warriors said: 'You yourself must be that messenger when we bear your dead body before your brother. Only then will Gunther's vassal see his sorrows. You have caused King Etzel
1942 such great losses here!'

Dancwart said: 'Leave off your threats now, and stand further back. I shall still make a few men's chainmail wet! I myself will tell the
1943 tidings at court and will also lament my great troubles to my lords.' He had made himself so repugnant to Etzel's men that they dared not attack him with their swords. Then they shot so many javelins
1944 into his rim that the weight made him drop his shield from his hand. They believed then that they would vanquish him, as he bore no shield. Oh, what deep wounds he struck through their helmets, causing great numbers of bold men to stumble before him! Bold Dancwart
1945 won great fame by those deeds.

They leapt at him from both sides, but some few of them entered the battle too early. He walked before the foes then as a wild boar in the forest does before the hounds! How could he have been bolder?
1946 His trail was once again wet with hot blood. No single warrior could

ever have fought better against his foes than he had done. They saw Hagen's brother stride proudly to court. 1947

Stewards and cup-bearers had heard the sound of swords. Great numbers of them then threw from their hands the drink and various foods they had carried to court. Strong foes in plenty met him before the steps. 1948

'How now, you stewards?' said the weary warrior. 'It is for you to treat your guests kindly and carry good food in for the lords, and let me, for my part, tell tidings to my dear lords.' He struck such heavy 1949 blows with his swinging sword against several of those who had the courage to leap down the steps towards him, that out of fear they had to back off higher. His mighty courage had wrought a great many marvels. 1950

THIRTY-THIRD ADVENTURE

HOW THE BURGUNDIANS FOUGHT AGAINST THE HUNS

WHEN bold Dancwart stepped beneath the door, he asked Etzel's retinue to stand further back. All his garments were dripping with blood; he carried a mighty sword, unsheathed, in his hand. Loudly 1951 Dancwart then called out to the warrior: 'You have sat here all too long, brother Hagen! To you and God in Heaven I lament our anguish! Both knights and squires lie dead in the lodgings.' 1952

Hagen called out to him: 'Who has done this?'

'It was Lord Blœdelin and his men. He's paid dearly for it, too, I can tell you. With my own hands I struck off his head.' 1953

'It is no great loss,' Hagen replied, 'if it is said of a knight that he has lost his life at warriors' hands. Comely women ought to lament him all the less. Now tell me, brother Dancwart, how do you come to 1954 be so red? I believe you suffer great anguish from your wounds. If he who's done this to you is anywhere in this land, it will cost him his life, unless the Foul Fiend preserves him!' 1955

'You see me hale and healthy—my clothes are wet with blood. That has been brought about by other men's wounds, so many of whom I have slain today. Even on oath I could never tell you the number.' 1956

Hagen said: 'Brother Dancwart, in that case guard the door for us and do not let a single one of the Huns out. I want to talk with the

warriors, as our peril compels us. Our retinue lies dead before them,
1957 a fate they have not deserved.'

'If I am to be chamberlain,' said bold Dancwart, 'I know how to serve such mighty kings well. I shall see to the stairs as befits my
1958 honour.' Kriemhilt's knights could not be more dismayed.

'I wonder greatly', Hagen went on, 'what the Hunnish knights are whispering in here. They would, I believe, gladly be rid of the man standing at the door there, he who has told the Burgundians the
1959 court tidings. I have long heard tell of Kriemhilt that she could not get over her heart's grief. Now let us drink love* and pay for the king's
1960 wine. The young overlord of the Huns must be the first of all!'

Then Hagen, that worthy hero, dealt the child Ortliep such a blow that the blood shot back along the sword up to his hand, and the boy's head flew into the queen's lap. Grim and massive slaughter began
1961 then among those knights. Next he dealt the tutor who had charge of the child such a fierce blow with both his hands that his head at once lay on the ground before the table. That was a wretched reward that
1962 he dealt the tutor. He saw a minstrel standing before Etzel's table. Hagen in his anger hastened over there. He struck off his right hand, which held the fiddle. 'Let that be your reward for the message you
1963 brought to Burgundy!'

'Alas for my hand!' said Wärbel the minstrel. 'Sir Hagen of Tronege, what wrong had I done you? It was in good faith that I went into your lords' land. How am I to make the melodies sing out, now
1964 I have lost my hand?'

Hagen cared little if he never fiddled again. He dealt mortal injuries to Etzel's warriors in the hall, slaying so many of them. He put to death
1965 plenty of people in the hall then. Valiant Volker leapt up from the table. His bow resounded loudly in his hand. Gunther's minstrel fiddled a
1966 monstrous tune then. Ah, what foes he won among the bold Huns!

The three proud kings also leapt up from the tables. They would gladly have parted the combatants before more damage was done. Their good sense could not then prevent it, as Volker and Hagen
1967 grew so enraged. Then the overlord of the Rhine saw that the battle was not to be parted. The prince himself then struck great numbers of gaping wounds through the bright chainmail of his foes. He was a
1968 man of mettle, as he showed in great measure. Mighty Gernot then also joined the battle. He slew great numbers of the Hunnish heroes with the sharp sword that Rüedeger had given him. He inflicted

grievous injuries on Etzel's warriors. Uote's young son leapt into the 1969
battle. His sword resounded splendidly, cutting through the helmets of Etzel's warriors from Hungary. Bold Giselher's hands did many marvels there. No matter how valiant they all were, the kings and also 1970
their vassals, Giselher was seen to stand before them all against the foes—he was a worthy hero. He caused great numbers to fall wounded into the blood there. 1971

Etzel's men, for their part, defended themselves stoutly. Yet then the guests were seen to make their way through the king's hall, hewing at the foes with their bright swords. Everywhere the grievous cry of woe was then heard. Those outside wanted to join their friends 1972
inside. They won very little profit at the doors. Those inside would most gladly have got out of the hall. Dancwart would let none of them up or down the stairs. At that a mighty press arose before the doors, 1973
and a great sound of swords upon helmets. By that bold Dancwart was greatly endangered. That caused his brother concern, as his loyalty commanded of him. Loudly Hagen then called out to Volker: 1974
'Do you see, companion, my brother standing there before the Hunnish warriors, beneath mighty blows? Friend, rescue my brother before we lose the knight!' 1975

'I will do so, for sure!' said the minstrel. He began to make his way through the palace, fiddling. A hard sword sounded out often in his hand. The warriors of the Rhine said great thanks to him for that. 1976
Bold Volker said to Dancwart: 'You have suffered very great hardship today. Your brother has asked me to come to your aid. If you will stand outside now, then I will stand inside.' 1977

Bold Dancwart stood outside the door. He defended the stairs against any who advanced. At that the swords were heard to ring out in the heroes' hands. Inside Volker of Burgundy, for his part, did the same. The bold fiddler called out over the crowd: 'The hall is well 1978
closed, friend Sir Hagen. Etzel's door is so well barred by two heroes' hands that some thousand bolts have latched it!' 1979

When Hagen of Tronege saw that the door was thus guarded, that famed, worthy hero flung his shield onto his back.* Only then did he begin to avenge what wrong had been done him. His foes had no hope whatever of surviving then. When the overlord of Bern observed 1980
that mighty Hagen was breaking so many helmets, the King of the Amelungs leapt up onto a bench, saying: 'Here Hagen is pouring out the worst drink of all!' 1981

The host was greatly troubled, as he then had every right to be—what dear friends were being taken from him before his eyes!—for he scarcely escaped with his life from his foes there. He sat full of
1982 anxiety—what did it avail him that he was king there?

Wealthy Kriemhilt called out to Dietrich: 'Help me now, noble knight, to escape with my life, for the sake of the honour of all the princes of the Amelungs, for if Hagen reaches me, I must breathe my
1983 last!'

'How am I to help you, noble queen?' said Sir Dietrich. 'I have my own troubles now. Gunther's men are so enraged that I can protect
1984 no one at this time.'

'No, Lord Dietrich, most noble, worthy knight, show your courtesy today and help me away from here, or I shall lie here slain!'
1985 Kriemhilt had every reason for such fears.

'I will try to help you, if I can, for never, not for a long time, have I seen so many worthy knights so bitterly enraged. I see the blood
1986 spurting through the helmets, as the swords strike them!'

That excellent knight called out with all his might, his voice ringing out loud as a bison's horn, so that the vast castle echoed with
1987 the power of it. Dietrich's strength was great beyond measure. Then Gunther heard that man call out in the fierce onslaught—he listened hard. He said: 'Dietrich's voice has reached my ears. I believe our
1988 knights have robbed him of someone here. I see him standing on the table—he is beckoning with his hand. You friends and kinsmen of Burgundy, cease fighting! Let us hear and see what has happened to
1989 the knight at my men's hands.'

When King Gunther asked and also commanded it, they put up their swords in the heat of the battle. It was a great show of authority to ensure that no one struck a blow there. He was quick enough
1990 to ask the Lord of Bern for tidings. He said: 'Most noble Dietrich, what wrongs have my friends done you here? I am ready and willing to offer you compensation and atonement. I would deeply regret any
1991 wrong that anyone might have done you.'

Lord Dietrich replied: 'I have been done no wrong. Let me leave the hall and this fierce battle, together with my retinue, on terms of
1992 truce with you. I will always serve to repay that, rest assured.'

'Why are you so quick to plead with them?' said Wolfhart then. 'The fiddler has not barred the door so firmly that we cannot open it wide enough to get out!'

'Be silent now,' said Sir Dietrich. 'You have done the devil of a lot!'* 1993

Then King Gunther said: 'I will give you leave: take out of the hall as few or as many as you will, except for my foes—they must remain here. They have done me such great wrong here among the Huns.' 1994

When Dietrich heard that, he took the noble queen by the arm—she was in great distress. On his other side he led Etzel away with him. Six hundred gallant men also walked away with Dietrich. 1995

Then the margrave, noble Rüedeger, said: 'If anyone else is to leave this hall who is, after all, glad to serve you, let us hear, for a lasting truce would be fitting between good friends.' 1996

Giselher of Burgundy answered him: 'Let truce and reconciliation be proclaimed to you and your men, since you are constant in your loyalty. You shall go from here without fear, along with your friends.' 1997

When Lord Rüedeger left the hall, five hundred or more followed the Lord of Pöchlarn, his friends and vassals, at whose hands King Gunther afterwards gained great losses. 1998

Then a Hunnish warrior saw Etzel walking close by Dietrich—he wanted to profit by that.* The fiddler dealt him such a blow that his head swiftly landed at Etzel's feet. 1999

When the lord of that land had made his way out of the hall, he turned back and looked at Volker: 'Alas for these guests of mine, this is dire peril—that all my warriors should lie dead before them! Woe 2000 upon this festivity!' said the proud king. 'There is one fighting inside there called Volker, fierce as a wild boar, and he is a minstrel. I thank my good fortune that I escaped that devil! His lays* sound ill, his 2001 bowing is red. His melodies fell great numbers of heroes dead. I don't know what that minstrel has against us, but I never gained such great woe by any guest.' 2002

They had let those they wanted leave the hall. Inside great clamour then arose. The guests grievously avenged what had befallen them before. Ah, what helmets valiant Volker broke apart! Gunther, 2003 the proud king, turned towards the turmoil: 'Do you hear the melodies, Hagen, which Volker is fiddling amongst the Huns over there, all those who go to the doors? It is red rosin he rubs on his fiddle's bow!' 2004

'I regret beyond measure', said Hagen, 'that I ever sat higher than that knight in hall. I have been his companion and he mine, and if we ever return home, we will still remain true to one another. See now, 2005

proud king, how Volker holds you dear! He is willingly earning your silver and your gold. His fiddler's bow cuts its way for him through
2006 the hard steel. It breaks brightly shining marks on the helmets. I never saw a fiddler make such a splendid stand as Volker the warrior has done today. His lays ring out through helmets and rims. He
2007 ought indeed to ride good warhorses and wear splendid garments!'

Of all the kinsmen of the Huns who had been in the hall, none now was left alive inside. Thus the clamour had died down—no one did further battle with them. The bold, gallant warriors laid their swords
2008 aside.

THIRTY-FOURTH ADVENTURE

HOW THEY THREW THE DEAD OUT OF THE HALL

THE lords sat down then after their wearisome labours. Volker and Hagen walked out of the hall. Those haughty warriors leaned upon
2009 their shields. Wise words were spoken by both of them there.

Then Giselher, the warrior of Burgundy, spoke up: 'Dear friends, you may not rest yet. You must carry the corpses out of the hall.
2010 We'll be attacked again, I tell you in all truth! They must lie no longer beneath our feet here. Before the Huns vanquish us by their attacks, we will yet hew such wounds as will give me great joy. I am firmly
2011 resolved on that,' said Giselher then.

'Happy am I to have such a lord!' said Hagen then. 'Such counsel would befit none but a warrior who has done such deeds as my young
2012 lord has today. You Burgundians may all rejoice in this!'

They followed that counsel then and carried seven thousand dead out through the doorway; they threw them out. They tumbled down the steps of the hall. Then there arose a most woeful clamour among
2013 their kinsmen. There were several among them who were so slightly wounded that if they had been tended more gently they would yet have recovered—falling from such a height, they inevitably died. Their
2014 friends mourned over them then, as they had good reason to do.

Then Volker the fiddler, that gallant hero, said: 'Now I see for myself that what I have been told is true. The Huns are base—they lament like women. They ought now to tend to their sorely
2015 wounded.'

A margrave then thought these words were well-meant. He had seen one of his kinsmen fall into the blood. He took him up into his arms and wanted to carry him away. The valiant minstrel then speared him to death with his javelin as he bent over his kinsman. 2016
When the others saw that, they took flight. All of them took to cursing that same minstrel. He picked up a javelin, very sharp and hard, which one of the Huns had flung up at him there. He flung it power- 2017
fully far away through the castle, high above the folk's heads. He gave Etzel's men lodgings further off from the hall.* People on all sides feared his mighty courage. 2018

Many thousand men stood in front of the hall then. Volker and Hagen then declared to King Etzel their full intent. (It was to cost the bold and worthy heroes dear in time to come.) 'It would become 2019
the people's protector* well,' said Hagen, 'if the lords were to fight at the very front, just as each of my lords does here. Their swords hew through helmets, and blood flows in their wake.' 2020

Etzel was so bold that he grasped his shield. 'Be on your guard now,' said Lady Kriemhilt, 'and offer gold to the warriors, piled high upon shield-rims, for if Hagen gets to grips with you over there, you will be in death's clutches.' The king was so bold that he 2021
wouldn't relent, something seldom practised by such a powerful prince nowadays. They had to drag him back by his shield-strap.

Grim Hagen set about mocking him again: 'It was no close 2022
kinship,' said Sir Hagen, 'that Etzel and Sivrit shared with one another. He loved Kriemhilt before she ever beheld you—basest of kings, why do you plot against me?' 2023

The noble king's wife heard these words. Kriemhilt was enraged that Hagen dared upbraid her before Etzel's men, and therefore she again began to plot against the guests. She said: 'For any man who 2024
were to slay Hagen of Tronege for me and bring his head before me here, I'd fill Etzel's rim with red gold, and give him as a reward, moreover, many good castles and lands.' 2025

'Now I don't know what they are waiting for,' said the minstrel. 'I never saw heroes standing in such a cowardly way before, when such a great reward was heard to be offered. Etzel ought never to hold them dear for this!' Those who eat the prince's bread so disgrace- 2026
fully here and now fail him in his greatest need—I see many of them standing here in most cowardly fashion. Yet they are supposed to be bold! They must bear the shame of this forever!' 2027

THIRTY-FIFTH ADVENTURE

HOW IRINC WAS SLAIN

THEN Margrave Irinc of Denmark called out: 'For a long time now I have risked my life for honour and have done much of the best when folk have met in battle. Bring me my armour now—I will take on
2028 Hagen!'

'I would advise against that,' said Hagen then. 'Tell the Hunnish warriors to stand further back. If some two or three of you leap into
2029 the hall, I'll send you back down the steps in a most unhealthy state!'

'That'll not deter me!' replied Irinc. 'I have tried such perilous tests before. I'll take you on alone with my sword. How will the haughty
2030 words you have spoken help you then?'

Irinc the warrior was quickly armed then, and Irnfrit of Thuringia, a bold youth, and mighty Hawart with a good thousand men. No matter what Irinc undertook, they wanted to stand by him
2031 in everything.

Then the fiddler saw a huge company approaching, all armed, alongside Irinc. Great numbers of them were wearing stout helmets,
2032 strapped on. Bold Volker grew somewhat angry at that. 'Do you see, friend Hagen, Irinc walking there, he who vowed to take you on alone with his sword? How does such lying become heroes? I have nothing but contempt for this! There must be a good thousand warriors or
2033 more walking armed alongside him.'

'Now do not accuse me of lying!' said Hawart's vassal. 'I'll willingly carry out all that I have vowed. By no means will I desist out of
2034 fear. Grim though Hagen may be, I will take him on alone.'

Irinc knelt at the feet of his kinsmen and vassals, beseeching them to let him take on the warrior alone. They did so unwillingly,
2035 for proud Hagen of Burgundy was well known to them. Yet Irinc pleaded with them so long that in the end it did take place. When his retinue saw what his intention was and that he was in pursuit of honour, they let him go ahead. A fierce battle then broke out between
2036 those two.

Irinc of Denmark held his javelin high in the air. That proud warrior of high repute covered himself with his shield. Then he ran up the stairs to Hagen, right up to the hall. Great clamour arose then

among the warriors. They hurled their javelins from their hands with all their might then, penetrating their sturdy shields right through to their bright garments, so that the shafts of the javelins flew high into the air. Next the two fierce, bold men reached for their swords.* 2037 2038

Bold Hagen's valour was mighty and great. Irinc, for his part, struck such blows at him that all the hall resounded. The palace and the towers echoed with the sound of their blows. The warrior could not carry out his intent then. Irinc left Hagen standing there unwounded. He hastened over to the fiddler. He thought he might overcome him with his fierce blows. Volker, that gallant warrior, was well capable of protecting himself with his shield. Then the fiddler struck him such a blow that Irinc's shield-bolts flew up over the rim into the air at Volker's hands. Irinc left him alone then—he was a deadly foe. Next he charged at Gunther of Burgundy. Each of them was strong enough in battle. No matter what blows Gunther and Irinc dealt one another, they caused no blood to flow from wounds. Their armour prevented that, being sturdy and of good quality. 2039 2040 2041 2042

Irinc abandoned Gunther and charged at Gernot—he hewed fire out of his chainmail. Mighty Gernot of Burgundy came close to slaying bold Irinc. Then Irinc leapt away from the prince—he was fleet enough of foot. The hero had soon slain four of the Burgundians, of the noble retinue of Worms on the Rhine. 2043

At that Giselher grew angrier than ever before. 'God knows, Sir Irinc,' said young Giselher, 'you must pay at my hands for those who now lie dead before you here!' With that he charged at him. He struck the Dane so hard that he could not move from the spot. At Giselher's hands he fell down into the blood, so that they all believed that the worthy hero would never strike another blow in battle. Yet Irinc lay there unwounded at Giselher's feet. Because of the din when the helmet was struck and the ringing of the sword his wits were much enfeebled, so that the bold warrior lost consciousness. Mighty Giselher had brought that about by his strength. 2044 2045 2046 2047

As the impact from the great blow to his head he had suffered there began to recede, Irinc thought: 'I am still alive and not wounded at all. For the first time now I have met the acquaintance of Giselher's valour!' He heard his foes talking as they stood on both sides of him. If they knew the truth he would have suffered still more. He could also hear that Giselher stood close by him there. He wondered how he might escape his foes. 2048 2049

Like a man berserk, he leapt up out of the blood! He owed his life to his fleetness of foot. Then he ran out of the hall, but there he found Hagen again and struck fierce blows against him with his courageous
2050 hands. At that Hagen thought: 'You must die! Unless the Foul Fiend protects you, you can't escape!' Yet Irinc wounded Hagen through
2051 his visor. The hero struck that blow with Waske,* an excellent sword. When Lord Hagen realized he had been wounded, the sword threshed about wildly in his hand.* Hawart's vassal had to give way to him
2052 then and there. Hagen followed him down the steps. Valiant Irinc flung his shield over his head. Even if that staircase had been three times as long, Hagen would never have let him strike a single blow.
2053 Ah, what red sparks flew from the top of his helmet!

Irinc came back to his men safe and sound. Then Kriemhilt was told of those tidings, of what he had done in battle against
2054 Hagen of Tronege; the queen thanked him most profoundly. 'Now God reward you, Irinc, most famed, worthy hero—you have given good hope to my heart and mind. Now I see Hagen's garments red with blood.' Kriemhilt herself, in her joy, took the shield from his
2055 hands.

'You have small cause to thank him,' said Hagen. 'If he'd make another attempt, that would befit a warrior. If he were to escape then, he'd be a bold man indeed! The wound I have received from him will
2056 bring you little profit. Your seeing my chainmail red because of my wound urges me on to bring about many a man's death! Only now am I angry at Hawart's vassal. Irinc the warrior has done me little
2057 damage as yet.'

Irinc of Denmark stood facing the wind. He was cooling himself in his chainmail; he unbuckled his helmet. All the people then said
2058 that he was of great courage. That raised the margrave's spirits high. Irinc spoke once more: 'My friends, I would have you know that you must arm me soon. I'll make another attempt to see if I can yet vanquish that haughty warrior.'

2059 His shield was hewn to pieces; he obtained a better one. With all speed the warrior was better armed. Full of hostile intent, he seized a mighty javelin, with which he wanted to attack Hagen again there.
2060 That deathly fierce* man waited for his foe to approach.

Hagen the warrior could wait no longer for him. He ran towards him, hurling spears at him and striking blows with his sword, all the way down the steps and out—his anger was great indeed. Irinic profited

very little by his strength then. They struck such blows through their shields that flames flew up in fiery red blazes. Hawart's vassal was so severely wounded by Hagen's sword, piercing his shield and his breastplate, that he was never to recover. 2061 2062

When Irinc the warrior realized he was wounded, he shifted his shield higher over his helmet-straps.* He thought he had suffered enough damage there. King Gunther's vassal was to do him still greater harm. Hagen found a javelin lying at his feet. He flung it at Irinc, the hero of Denmark, so that the shaft was left sticking out of his head. Hagen the warrior had doled him a grim end. 2063 2064

Irinc had to retreat to the men of Denmark. Before they unbuckled the warrior's helmet they broke the javelin off his head—death neared him then. His kinsmen wept over this, as they had good reason to do. The queen then walked over to where he lay. She started the lament for mighty Irinc. She wept over his wounds; it grieved her deeply. Then the bold and gallant warrior said before his kinsmen: 'Leave off this lament, most noble lady. What help is your weeping? I must lose my life because of these wounds I have received. Death will no longer let me serve you and Etzel.' 2065 2066 2067

He said to the men of Thuringia and those of Denmark: 'No hand of yours is to accept the queen's gift, her bright red gold! If you take on Hagen, you must meet with death.' 2068

His colour had faded. Valiant Irinc bore the sign of death. It grieved them deeply. Hawart's vassal could live no longer.

The men of Denmark had no choice but to do battle then. Irnfrit and Hawart leapt out of the chamber, with some thousand heroes. Uproar far beyond measure was heard on all sides, a great and mighty roar. Ah, what sharp javelins they hurled at the Burgundians! Bold Irnfrit ran at the minstrel, gaining great harm at his hands. The noble fiddler dealt the landgrave a blow through his stout helmet—he was a fierce fighter! Then Lord Irnfrit dealt the bold minstrel such a blow that the mesh of his mail broke and his breastplate was covered in red fire. Nevertheless the landgrave fell dead before the fiddler. 2069 2070 2071 2072

Hawart and Hagen had found their way to one another. He who watched that fight might have seen marvels. The swords in the heroes' hands rained down upon one another. Hawart had to die at the hands of the Burgundian. When the Danes and the Thuringians 2073

saw their lords were dead, dread peril arose outside the hall before they had gained the door by their courageous hands. Great numbers
2074 of helmets and rims were hewn to pieces there.

'Draw back,' said Volker then, 'and let them come in. Come what may, they will not accomplish what they intend. They must die in here, in no time at all. They will earn by their deaths what the queen
2075 gives them.'

When the haughty warriors came into the hall, their heads were brought so low, great numbers of them, that they had to die by the Burgundians' fierce blows. Bold Gernot fought well; so also did
2076 Giselher the warrior.

A thousand and four had come into the hall. The glint of swords was to be seen, great numbers of them hissing fiercely. In the end all the warriors inside were slain. Many marvels might be told of the
2077 Burgundians.

After that there was silence, once the clamour had died down. The blood of the dead men flowed through the drains and the gutters on all sides there. The men of the Rhine had brought that about by their
2078 great valour. Then the Burgundians sat down to rest again. They laid aside both their swords and shields. The bold minstrel still stood before the doors. He was waiting to see if anyone still wanted to go
2079 and do battle with them.

The king lamented greatly, as also did his wife. Maidens and ladies beat their breasts there. I believe that Death had conspired against them. (Many warriors were yet to lose their lives there at the hands
2080 of the guests.)

THIRTY-SIXTH ADVENTURE

HOW THE QUEEN ORDERED THAT THE HALL BE BURNED DOWN

'UNSTRAP your helmets now,' said Hagen the warrior. 'I and my companion will guard you. If Etzel's men want to make another at-
2081 tempt against us, then I'll warn my lords as fast as I can.'

Then great numbers of worthy knights bared their heads. They sat down upon the wounded who had met with death at their hands and had fallen into the blood before them. The noble guests had been ill
2082 tended there.

Even before evening had come the king, and also the queen, saw to it that the Hunnish warriors made a further attempt. Some twenty thousand or more of them could be seen standing before them—they were obliged to go into battle there. 2083

A fierce assault upon the guests began at once. Dancwart, Hagen's brother, that man of great boldness, leapt away from his lords to meet the foes outside the door. They thought he had died; he had come out hale and hearty. 2084

The fierce battle lasted until night took it from them. Then the guests defended themselves against Etzel's men as became worthy heroes, all through that summer-long day. Ah, how many more bold knights lay doomed to death before them! It was at the solstice that 2085 this great slaughter happened, when Lady Kriemhilt so avenged her heart's grief on her nearest kindred and many another man that King Etzel never knew happiness again. 2086

The day had run out for the Burgundians—they had good reason to be troubled then. They thought that a swift death would be better for them than to be tortured for a long time there, suffering beyond measure. The proud, gallant knights requested a truce then. They 2087 asked that the king should be brought to them there. The heroes, red with blood and armour-rusty, stepped out of the hall, those three proud kings. They didn't know to whom they might lament their most grievous injuries. 2088

Etzel and Kriemhilt both walked over. The land was subject to them, and so their company grew in number. Etzel said to the guests: 'Tell me now, what do you want of me? You think to gain a truce—that could scarcely be after such great harm as you have done me. 2089 You shall not profit by it as long as I live—slaying my son and many of my kinsmen! Truce and reconciliation must be denied you entirely.' 2090

Gunther answered: 'Great peril forced that upon us. All my retinue lay dead at the hands of your heroes in the lodgings. How had I deserved that? I came to you in good faith; I believed that you held me dear.' 2091

Then young Giselher of Burgundy said: 'You heroes of Etzel who are still alive here, what do you reproach me, this warrior, for? What wrong have I done you? For it was in friendship that I rode into this land.' 2092

They said: 'All the castle is full of your kindness, to the grief of the whole land. We would indeed have welcomed it if you had never left

Worms on the Rhine. You have orphaned the whole land, you and
2093 your brothers together.'

Gunther the warrior spoke in anger then: 'If you will bring about a reconciliation and put an end to this great hostility towards us foreign warriors, that will be for the benefit of both sides. We are
2094 entirely free of blame, no matter what harm Etzel does us.'

Then the host said to the guests: 'My sorrows and yours bear little comparison. Because of the great suffering, the losses, and disgrace
2095 I have incurred here, none of you shall ever leave here alive.'

Then mighty Gernot said to the king: 'In that case may God command you to act worthily.* Slay us foreigners, but let us go down to
2096 meet you in the open. That will do you honour. Whatever may befall us, let it take place soon. You have so many in good health that if they dare attack us, they'll not let us battle-weary men live. How long are
2097 we warriors to suffer like this?'

Etzel's warriors would almost have agreed to let them go out of the hall. Kriemhilt came to hear of that—it displeased her greatly. Thus
2098 the truce was in all haste retracted from the foreigners.

'No, you Hunnish warriors, in good faith I advise you against what you intend. Do not let those bloodthirsty men out of the hall, or else
2099 your kinsmen must fall to their deaths. If none of them were alive now except my noble brothers, Uote's sons—if they get out into the fresh air and their mail cools, then you are all lost! No bolder knights
2100 were ever born in this world.'

Then young Giselher said: 'My most fair sister, I did very ill to trust you when you invited me across the Rhine into this land, to face this great peril. How have I deserved death at the hands of the Huns
2101 here? I was always loyal to you and never did you harm. It was in the hope that you held me dear, my dearest sister, that I rode to court here.
2102 Think whether you can grant us mercy—we have no choice now.'

'I cannot grant you mercy—I am merciless. Hagen of Tronege has done me such great wrongs that there can be no reconciliation as long
2103 as I live. You must all pay the price,' said Etzel's wife. 'If you will give me Hagen, alone, as a hostage, then I will not refuse to let you live, for you are my brothers and we are one mother's children. On that
2104 condition I will seek a reconciliation with these heroes here.'

'Now God in Heaven forbid!' replied Gernot. 'Even if there were a thousand of us, kin to your kinsmen, we would all lie dead rather than
2105 give you one man as hostage here. That shall never be done!'

'We must die, come what may,' said Giselher then. 'No one shall prevent us from defending ourselves in knightly ways. If anyone would gladly fight against us, then here we stand again, for I never went against my loyalty to any friend of mine.' 2106

Then bold Dancwart said—it would not have become him to be silent—'My brother Hagen does not stand alone. Those who refuse a truce here may come to regret it. We shall give you proof of that, rest assured.' 2107

The queen then said: 'You most gallant heroes, go nearer to the stairs now and avenge my wrongs. I will always repay you for that as I rightly ought. I will reward Hagen well for his haughtiness. Let not 2108 a single one of them out of the hall, and then I'll give the order that all four corners be set alight. Thus all my wrongs will be well avenged!'

Etzel's warriors were quickly at the ready. With blows and spear- 2109 shots they drove those who were still standing outside there back into the hall. Great uproar arose at that. The princes and their vassals, however, never wanted to part. They could never abandon their loyalty to one another. 2110

Etzel's wife then ordered that the hall be set alight. Then they tortured the warriors with fire there. A gust of wind caused all the hall to catch fire in no time at all. I believe no people ever faced greater peril. There were plenty in there who called out: 'Alas for this peril! 2111 We would much rather die in battle. May God take pity! We are all lost! Now the queen in her anger is wreaking monstrous vengeance upon us.' 2112

One of those inside said: 'We must lie dead here. What use to us now is the greeting that the king sent us? The strong heat causes me such painful thirst that I think my life will soon end amid these troubles.' 2113

Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'You noble, worthy knights, if any of you suffers pangs of thirst, let him drink the blood here. In such heat it is even better than wine. There is nothing else for it now.' 2114

At that one of the warriors walked over to a corpse. He knelt by his wound; he unstrapped his helmet. He began drinking the flowing blood. Little though he was accustomed to it, he thought it excellent. 2115 'Now God reward you, Sir Hagen,' said that weary man, 'that I've drunk so well by your counsel. Seldom have I been poured out better wine. If I live any longer, I'll always hold you dear.' 2116

When the others heard that he thought it good, many more of them also drank the blood. Some of them gained much strength by that.

(Fair women in great numbers were to pay for that afterwards by the
2117 loss of their dearly beloved.)

The fire rained down upon them into the hall. They steered it down and away from them with their shields. The smoke and the heat both
2118 hurt them hard. I believe no greater misery ever befell heroes. Then Hagen of Tronege said: 'Stand by the wall of the hall. Don't let the brands fall on your helmet-straps. Tread them deeper into the blood
2119 with your feet. This is a foul festivity the queen is holding for us.'

In such suffering the night did, however, come to an end for them. The bold minstrel and Hagen, his companion, were still standing outside the hall, leaning on their rims. They were expecting more
2120 harm from the men of Etzel's land. Then the fiddler said. 'Let us go into the hall now. Then the Huns will think that we are all dead because of this torture that has been inflicted upon us. They will yet
2121 see us stand up against one or two of them in battle!'

Then young Giselher of Burgundy said: 'I think dawn is about to break. A cool wind is rising. Now may God in Heaven let us yet live to see happier times! My sister Kriemhilt has given us a foul
2122 festivity.'

Then another of them said: 'I see day now. Since there is nothing else for it now, arm yourselves, heroes, remember your lives are at
2123 stake. King Etzel's wife will soon come for us again.'

The host would have liked to believe that the guests were dead as a result of their suffering and their ordeal by fire. Yet six hundred
2124 bold men were still alive in there. No king ever had better knights. The guards around the foreigners had clearly seen that the guests were still alive, despite all that had happened to harm and injure the lords and their vassals. Many could still be seen standing in good
2125 health in the chamber. They told Kriemhilt that many of them had survived. The queen replied that that could never be—that any of them should have survived that ordeal by fire: 'I still believe that they
2126 all lie dead.'

The princes and their vassals would gladly have survived, if anyone would yet show them mercy. They could find none from those of
2127 Hungary. Then they avenged their deaths with most willing hands. Come morning that day they were greeted by a fierce onslaught, which brought heroes into peril. Great numbers of hard javelins were hurled in at them. The bold and proud warriors defended themselves
2128 in knightly fashion.

Etzel's retinue were driven on by their desire to earn Kriemhilt's wealth; moreover they wanted to carry out the king's commands. (In consequence many of them were soon to meet with death.) 2129
Marvels might be told of the promises and gifts Kriemhilt offered. She ordered that red gold be carried there on shields. She gave it to any who desired it and would accept it. No greater reward was ever offered against foes. 2130

A huge body of warriors came up, armed. Then bold Volker said: 'Well, here we stand again. I never saw heroes more willing to fight than those who have taken the king's gold to harm us.' 2131

Plenty of them then called out: 'Closer, heroes, closer, so that we can put an end here to this, and do so in good time. No one remains here, after all, except those doomed to die.' At that their shields were soon seen to be shot full with javelins. 2132

What more can I say? Some twelve hundred men made fierce attempts, advancing and retreating. Then the guests cooled their ardour with the wounds they dealt them. No one could part the adversaries. Thus the blood was seen to flow from mortally deep wounds, 2133
many of which were struck there. Every one of them was then heard to lament for his friends. The proud and powerful king's deserving warriors had all died. Their dear kinsmen grieved greatly for them. 2134

THIRTY-SEVENTH ADVENTURE

HOW RÜEDEGER WAS SLAIN

COME morning, the foreigners had done good deeds. Gotelint's spouse* came walking to court. Then he saw the grievous injuries on both sides. Most loyal Rüedeger wept fervently over that. 'Woe is me,' 2135
said the warrior, 'that ever I was born! Alas that no one can prevent this great suffering! Gladly though I would bring about a truce, the king will have nothing of it, for he sees his sorrows grow and grow.' 2136

Then good Rüedeger sent a message to Dietrich, asking whether they could yet change the proud king's mind. The Lord of Bern sent a message back to him: 'Who could prevent this? King Etzel will let no one part the foes.' 2137

Then one of the Hunnish warriors saw Rüedeger standing there with tears in his eyes, for he had shed many. The Hun said to the

queen: 'See now how he stands there, he who after all has the great-
2138 est authority with Etzel here, and whom they all serve, people and lands. How is it that so many castles are made over to Rüedeger, great numbers of them by the gift of the king? He has never yet struck a
2139 praiseworthy blow in these attacks! It seems to me he does not care what is happening here, since he has all he wants in abundance. They say of him, he is bolder than anyone else could be—there has been
2140 wretchedly little sign of that in these troubles.'

Sad at heart, that most loyal hero glanced at the man he heard speak those words. He thought: 'You must pay for this—you call me
2141 a coward! You have said your piece too loudly at court!'

He clenched his fist, then ran at him and struck the Hun such a powerful blow that he at once lay dead at his feet! King Etzel's
2142 anguish was added to again.

'Away with you, infamous coward!' said Rüedeger then. 'I have sorrows and suffering enough. Why do you reproach me for not
2143 fighting here? I would have every right to be hostile to the guests, and would have done them all the harm I could, except it was I who led the warriors here. I myself was their escort into my lord's land.
2144 For that reason the hands of this exile must not fight with them.'

Then Etzel, that proud king, said to the margrave: 'How have you helped us, most noble Rüedeger? For we have so many doomed to death here in this land—we needed no more of them. You have acted
2145 most ill.'

The noble knight replied: 'He harassed me and taunted me with the honour and possessions, so many of which I have received from
2146 your hands. That has cost the liar somewhat dear.'

Then the queen came up, having also seen what had happened to the Hun as a result of the hero's anger. She lamented it beyond measure; her eyes grew wet. She said to Rüedeger: 'How have we
2147 deserved that you should add to the suffering of myself and the king? Now you have always told us, noble Rüedeger, that you would risk your honour and even your life for our sake. I've heard many warriors
2148 accord you most great praise. I remind you of your goodwill, and that you swore to me, when you advised me to take Etzel, excellent knight, that you would serve me until one of us died. Never was I,
2149 poor woman, in such grievous need of that.'

'There is no denying it. I swore to you, noble lady, that I would risk my honour and even my life for you. I did not swear that I would

forfeit my soul. It was I who brought the well-born princes to this festivity.' 2150

She said: 'Think, Rüedeger, on your great loyalty, your constancy, and also the oaths you swore, that you would always avenge any harm done to me and all my wrongs.'

The margrave replied: 'I have seldom refused you anything.' 2151

Mighty Etzel also began to plead. They both then knelt at his feet. The noble margrave was visibly in distress at that. That most loyal warrior said in his great misery: 'Alas for me, Godforsaken wretch, 2152 that I have lived to see this! I must relinquish all my honour, the loyalty and courtesy that God commanded of me. Alas, God in Heaven, that death does not avert this from me! Whatever I now leave 2153 undone, whatever I undertake, I will have acted basely and most ill. Yet if I do neither, all the people will curse me. Let Him guide me now who brought about my birth!' 2154

The king, and also his wife, pleaded intensely with him then. Because of this warriors were afterwards to lose their lives at Rüedeger's hands, and the hero himself was also to die. You can hear for yourselves now what a most wretched course he followed. He knew he 2155 would gain harm and suffering beyond measure. He would most willingly have refused the king's request, and also that of the queen. He was sorely afraid that if he slew a single one of the guests, the whole world would bear him ill-will. 2156

Then the valiant warrior said to the king: 'Sir King, take back now all that I hold at your hands. Neither the land nor the castles shall remain mine. I will go on foot into exile.' 2157

King Etzel replied: 'Who would help me then? I'll give it all to you outright, the land and the people, if you'll avenge me, Rüedeger, on my foes. You shall be a powerful king at Etzel's side.' 2158

Rüedeger answered: 'How am I to go about this? I invited them home to my house, I kindly offered them drink and food and gave them my gifts—how can I plot their deaths? The people perhaps 2159 think that I am a coward. I have not denied the most noble princes and their vassals any service of mine. Yet I regret the friendship I have entered upon with them. I gave my daughter to Giselher 2160 the warrior. She could not be better bestowed upon anyone in this world—he possesses such courtesy and honour, such loyalty and also wealth. Never did I see so young a king of such true excellence.' 2161

Then Kriemhilt spoke again: 'Most noble Rüedeger, take pity now upon our sorrows, mine and the king's also. Consider that no host
2162 ever acquired such accursed guests.'

The margrave replied to the noble queen: 'Today Rüedeger himself must pay for all the kindness which you and my lord have shown me.
2163 I must die in return. That can no longer be delayed. I know full well that before the day is out my castles and my lands must fall vacant to you, when I die at the hands of one or other of them. I commend to your mercy my wife and my children, and also the many exiles who
2164 are there at Pöchlarn.'

'Now God reward you, Rüedeger!' said the king then. He and the queen both rejoiced. 'We shall take good care of your people. Yet I
2165 trust to my good fortune that you yourself may well survive.'

Now he set at risk both body and soul. Etzel's wife then began to weep. Rüedeger said: 'I must carry out what I vowed to you. Alas for
2166 my friends, whom I am loath to attack!'

People saw him walk away from the king, full of sadness. He found his warriors standing close by him. He said: 'You must arm your-
2167 selves, all my men. To my sorrow, I must attack the bold Burgundians.'

They ordered the squires to leap quickly over to where their arms were to be found. Whether helmets or shield-rims, they were carried over to them by their retinue. (The proud foreigners were soon to
2168 hear sad tidings told.)

Rüedeger was then armed, along with five hundred men. He also acquired twelve warriors to help him, who wanted to win fame in battle's peril. (They had no knowledge that death was thus nearing
2169 them.) Then Rüedeger was seen to walk beneath his helmet. Rüedeger's men bore sharp swords, and bright, broad shields before
2170 their hands. The fiddler saw that, much to his grief.

Then young Giselher saw his father-in-law walking with his helmet strapped on. How could he then imagine that he intended anything
2171 but good? The noble king was greatly cheered at this. 'Happy am I now to have such allies', said Giselher the warrior, 'as we have won on these ways! We shall profit full well by my wife here.
2172 I rejoice in good faith that the betrothal ever took place!'

'I don't know why your hopes are so high,' said the minstrel then. 'Where did you ever see, seeking reconciliation, so many heroes walk with helmets strapped on, bearing swords in their hands? Rüedeger
2173 wants to earn his castles and his lands at our cost.'

Even before the fiddler had finished speaking, they saw noble Rüedeger outside the hall. He laid his good shield down at his feet. The time had come for him to deny his friends his service and greeting. 2174
The noble margrave called out into the hall: 'You bold Nibelungs, defend yourselves now on all sides. You ought to have benefited by me, but now you will pay dearly at my hands. Once we were friends— I renounce that loyalty now.' 2175

Those men beset by peril were shocked at those tidings then, for not one of them rejoiced that he whom they held dear wanted to do battle with them there—from their *foes* they had suffered great hardship. 2176

'Now God in Heaven forbid,' said Gunther the warrior, 'that you should renounce the kindness you have shown us and the great loyalty we did indeed expect of you. I trust that you will never do this.' 2177

'Indeed, I have no choice,' said the bold warrior then. 'I must do battle with you, for I've vowed to do so. Defend yourselves now, bold heroes, as you value your lives. King Etzel's wife would not spare me this.' 2178

'This is too late in the day now for you to declare hostilities against us,' replied the proud king. 'Now may God reward you, most noble Rüedeger, for the loyalty and love you have shown us, if you would only treat us more kindly now the end has come. We would always 2179
seek to repay you, I and my kinsmen, for what you have given us, if you would let us live. Think, noble Rüedeger, of those splendid gifts you gave us when you brought us in good faith here into Etzel's land.' 2180

'How willingly I would grant you,' said Rüedeger the warrior, 'such gifts as I would gladly heap upon you in abundance, as I had hoped! Then no abuse would ever fall upon me.' 2181

'Change your mind, noble Rüedeger,' said Gernot then, 'for no host ever treated his guests with such true friendship as you did us. You ought to profit well by that if we live any longer.' 2182

'Would God,' said Rüedeger, 'most noble Gernot, that you were by the Rhine and I were dead with some honour, since I must attack you! Never yet did friends act worse by heroes!' 2183

'Now God reward you, Sir Rüedeger,' replied Gernot, 'for your most sumptuous gifts. I grieve for your death if such virtue is to perish with you. I bear your sword here which you gave me, worthy hero. 2184
Never has it failed me in all this peril. Many a knight lies dead beneath

its blades. It is clean and constant, splendid and worthy. I believe no
2185 warrior will ever give so rich a gift again. If you will not change your mind, but will attack us now, if you slay any of my friends that I still have in here, I'll take your life with your own sword. I will grieve then
2186 for you, Rüedeger, and for your noble wife.'

'Would God, Sir Gernot, that it might happen that all your wishes were carried out here, and that your friends might survive! Both my
2187 daughter and my wife must place their full trust in you.'*

Then fair Uote's son of Burgundy said: 'Why are you doing this, Sir Rüedeger? Those who have come here with me all hold you dear—you act ill to intervene. You want to make a widow of your fair
2188 daughter too early. If you and your warriors attack me in battle, that is no friendly way to show why I trust you above all other men, which
2189 is why I took your daughter for my wife.'

'Bear your loyalty in mind, most noble, proud king. If God sends you away from here,' said Rüedeger, 'do not let the damsel pay the
2190 price for my deeds. Be merciful to her in your courtesy.'

'I'd do so in all justice,' said young Giselher, 'yet if my noble kinsmen who are still inside here should die at your hands, then my most constant friendship with you, and also your daughter, must be
2191 at an end.'

'Now God grant us mercy!' said the bold warrior.

Then they raised their shields, setting off to do battle with the guests in Kriemhilt's hall. Hagen called out loudly then, down the
2192 steps: 'Stay a while, most noble Rüedeger,' said Hagen. 'We would talk more, I and my lords, as our peril compels us. How can the death
2193 of us foreigners aid Etzel?' 'I stand here in great trouble,' Hagen went on. 'The Huns have hewn to pieces before my hands the shield which Lady Gotelint gave me to bear. I bore it in friendship into
2194 Etzel's land. May God in Heaven grant that I should yet bear so good a shield as that you hold before your hand, most noble Rüedeger!
2195 Then I would have no need of any hauberk in battles.'

'I would most willingly help you by giving you my shield, if I dared offer it you, despite Kriemhilt. Yet take it, Hagen, and bear it in
2196 your hand. Ah, if only you were to take it back home to Burgundy!'

When he so willingly offered to give him the shield, plenty of eyes grew red with hot tears. It was the last gift that Rüedeger of Pöchlarn
2197 ever offered to any warrior. No matter how grim Hagen was and how hard of heart, the gift that the worthy hero gave him, so close to his

end, moved him to pity. Great numbers of noble knights were saddened along with him. 2198

'Now God in Heaven reward you, most noble Rüedeger! Your like will never live again, giving such splendid gifts to foreign warriors. May God command that your courtesy lives forever! Alas for these 2199
tidings!' Hagen went on. 'We had so many other burdens to bear. If we are to fight with friends, let that be lamented to God!'

The margrave replied: 'I am heartily sorry for this.' 2200

'Now God reward you for this gift, most noble Rüedeger! No matter how these proud warriors treat you, my hand will never touch you in battle here, even if you were to slay all the men of Burgundy.' 2201

Worthy Rüedeger bowed courteously to him for that. On all sides they wept that no one could put an end to those heart's sorrows. There was great anguish there. (The father of all virtues was to lie dead with Rüedeger.) 2202

Then Volker the minstrel spoke from the hall: 'Since my companion Hagen has made this truce with you, you shall have it in constancy from my hand also. You earned it well when we came into this land. 2203
Most noble margrave, you must be my messenger. The margravine gave me these red torques to wear at the festivity here. You can see them for yourself—be my witness that I did so.' 2204

'Would God in Heaven,' Rüedeger replied, 'that the margravine should give you yet more! I'll gladly tell these tidings to my beloved, if I live to see her—rest assured of that!' 2205

When he had made that vow to him, Rüedeger raised his shield. He went berserk. He waited no longer there, but ran at the guests, most like a warrior. The wealthy margrave struck many a mighty blow. 2206

Those two stood back, Volker and Hagen, for those bold knights had vowed to him before that they would do so. Yet Rüedeger found such bold men standing by the doors that he began battle with a troubled mind. Bent on slaughter, Gunther and Gernot let him 2207
enter—they had heroes' minds. Giselher stood back then; he was truly sorry for this. He still thought to survive, which was why he avoided Rüedeger. 2208

Then the margrave's men leapt at their foes. They were seen to follow their lord in most warrior-like fashion. They bore in their hands cutting swords, which caused many helmets to break apart there, and many a splendid rim. The weary Burgundians struck 2209
against those of Pöchlarn many fierce blows which weighed straight

and deep, right through the bright mail to the seat of life. They did
2210 most splendid deeds in that battle.

By now the noble retinue of Pöchlarn had all made its way in. Volker and Hagen quickly leapt to the attack. They had given a truce to none but the one man. The blood ran down through helmets at the
2211 blows struck by their hands. How fiercely many swords rang out in the hall! Many shield-clasps leapt out of their fastenings, the gems in the shields falling into the blood as they were hewn to pieces. They
2212 fought so fiercely that none will ever do the like again.

The overlord of Pöchlarn strode back and forth as only a man of courage can in battle. That day Rüedeger showed beyond doubt that
2213 he was a valiant warrior of high renown.

Those warriors Gunther and Gernot stood their ground there; they slew great numbers of heroes in the battle. Giselher and Dancwart,
2214 those two, thought little of dispatching great numbers to their doom.

Rüedeger showed beyond doubt that he had ample strength and was bold and well armed. Ah, what heroes he slew! One of the Burgundians saw this—he was enraged. That caused noble Rüedeger's
2215 death to draw near. Mighty Gernot called out to the hero. He said to the margrave: 'You will let none of my men live, most noble Rüedeger! That troubles me beyond measure—I can't look on any
2216 longer. Now your gift may well come to harm you, since you have taken so many of my friends from me. Turn around and face me now, most
2217 noble, bold warrior. I shall prove worthy of your gift as best as I can!'

Before the margrave could make his way over to him, bright mail had to be discoloured.* Then those two men, avid for honour, leapt at
2218 one another. Both ducked under their shields to avoid deep wounds. Their swords were so sharp that nothing could counter them. Then Rüedeger the warrior struck Gernot through his flint-hard helmet, so that the blood flowed down. The bold and worthy knight was quick
2219 to repay him for that. He swung Rüedeger's gift high in his hands. Although he was mortally wounded, he struck him a blow through his excellent shield, right down to his helmet-straps.* By that blow
2220 fair Gotelint's husband had to die. Never was such a rich gift worse rewarded. Both fell slain then, Gernot and Rüedeger, by each other's hands in the battle.

Only now was Hagen enraged, when he saw what great harm had
2221 been done. The hero of Tronege then said: 'An ill fate has befallen us. We have suffered such great harm by the loss of these two that their

people and lands will never overcome it. Rüedeger's heroes will pay the price for this at the hands of us strangers to this land.' 2222

'Alas for my brother,* whose death has been brought about here! What ill tidings reach me at all times! I must also rue noble Rüedeger forever. There is harm and grievous loss on both sides.' 2223

When Lord Giselher saw that his father-in-law was dead, those who were in the hall there had to suffer peril. Death sought hard for his retinue there. Of the men of Pöchlarn, not a single one survived. 2224

Gunther and Giselher, and also Hagen, Dancwart, and Volker, those worthy warriors, walked over to where they saw the two men lying. The heroes wept there in their grief. 'Death is robbing us 2225 harshly,' said young Giselher. 'Now leave off your weeping and let us go out into the breeze, so that our chainmail may cool, battle-weary as we are. I don't believe God in Heaven will deign to let us live longer here.' Some warriors were seen sitting, others leaning. They were idle 2226 again. Rüedeger's heroes lay dead there. The clamour had died down.

The silence lasted so long that it irked Etzel. 'Alas for such service!' 2227 said the king's wife. 'It has not been so constant that our foes can have paid the price at Rüedeger's hands. He wants to lead them back into Burgundy. How does it help, King Etzel, that we have shared with 2228 him all that he wanted? The hero has acted ill. He who ought to have avenged us there wants to seek a truce.'

Volker, that most gallant warrior, answered her: 'Sadly, that is not 2229 so, most noble king's wife. If I dared to call such a noble person a liar, then I might say that you have lied devilishly about Rüedeger. He and his warriors have been entirely deceived if they thought to obtain a truce. He has done the king's bidding so willingly that he 2230 and his retinue lie dead here. Look all about you now, Kriemhilt, for someone to command now. Rüedeger the hero has served you until his end. If you don't want to believe this, you shall be shown the 2231 truth of the matter.'

To her heart's grief that then took place. They carried the hero who had been hewn down to where the king could see him. Etzel's warriors were never so truly grief-stricken. When they saw the mar- 2232 grave borne dead, no scribe could ever record or tell aloud of the great breast-beating which began to show itself there, on the part of man and woman alike, in their hearts' grief. Etzel's grief was so great that 2233 the mighty king roared like a lion in his heartfelt cry of woe, as also did his wife. They mourned beyond measure for worthy Rüedeger. 2234

THIRTY-EIGHTH AVENTURE

HOW LORD DIETRICH'S WARRIORS WERE ALL SLAIN

THEN such great grief was heard on all sides that the palace and the towers resounded with the cries of woe. One of Dietrich of Bern's men heard this, too. How he hurried when he heard those stark
2235 tidings! He said then to the prince: 'Listen, my lord Dietrich! As long as I have lived, I have never heard such truly impossible lamentation as I have now heard. I think King Etzel himself has come
2236 to harm. How might they otherwise all be in such anguish? The king or Kriemhilt—one or other of them lies dead as a result of the bold guests' hostility. Great numbers of gallant knights are weeping
2237 beyond measure.'

Then the hero of Bern said: 'My beloved men, do not be in too great haste now. All that the foreign warriors have done here was
2238 caused by dire necessity. Let them profit by the truce I offered them.'

Then bold Wolfhart said: 'I will go over and ask for tidings as to what they have done, and will tell you them then, my dearest lord,
2239 once I've found out what has caused this lament.'

Then Lord Dietrich said: 'When anger is to be expected if uncouth questions are put, that can easily trouble warriors' minds.
2240 I don't want you, Wolfhart, to ask questions of them.' Then he asked Helpfrich* to hurry over and find out from Etzel's men or the guests themselves what had happened there.

2241 Such great lamentation had never been seen. The messenger put his questions: 'What has been done here?'

One amongst them then said: 'What happiness we had in Hungary has all vanished. Rüedeger lies slain here by the hands of
2242 the Burgundians. Of those who entered the hall with him, not one has survived.'

Helpfrich could never be more sorrowful. Never had he been so unwilling to tell tidings. The messenger went back to Dietrich, weep-
2243 ing sorely.

'What have you found out for us?' said Dietrich then. 'Why are you weeping so sorely, Sir Helpfrich?'

The noble warrior replied: 'I have good reason to mourn. The
2244 Burgundians have slain worthy Rüedeger.'

Then the hero of Bern said: 'God forbid! That would be stark vengeance, and fit for the Devil's scorn! How might Rüedeger have merited that of them? I know full well that the foreigners hold him dear.' 2245

Wolfhart answered: 'If they have done this, it must cost all of them their lives. If we were to tolerate this, we would be disgraced. Worthy Rüedeger has done us great service.'* 2246

The overlord of the Amelungs ordered that more be found out. Full of troubles, he sat at a window. He asked Hildebrant, then, to go to the guests to find out from them what had been done there. Master Hildebrant, that battle-bold* warrior, bore neither 2247 shield nor sword in his hands: he wanted to approach the guests with courtesy. His sister's son chided him. Fierce Wolfhart said: 'If you 2248 want to go there unarmed, you're bound to be insulted, and you'll have to return in disgrace. If you go there armed, then some of them may well hold back from scorn.' 2249

Then the wise old man armed himself on the young fool's advice. Before he was aware of it, all Dietrich's warriors were in their battle-gear and bore swords in their hands. The hero was sorry for it; he would most willingly have prevented it. He asked where they 2250 wanted to go. 'We want to go with you. What if Hagen of Tronege is not so ready then to hurl insults at you, as is his habit?' When he heard those words, the warrior gave them leave to go. 2251

Then bold Volker saw the warriors of Bern, Dietrich's men, approaching well-armed, girded with swords. They bore shields in their hands. He told this to his lord of Burgundy. The fiddler said: 2252 'I see Dietrich's men approaching there, full of hostility, armed beneath helmets—they want to attack us. I believe we strangers to this land have hard times ahead.' 2253

At that moment Hildebrant arrived. He laid his shield-rim down at his feet. He asked Gunther's men: 'Alas, you worthy heroes, what harm had Rüedeger done you? My lord Dietrich has sent 2254 me to you here. If any of you had slain the noble margrave, as we've been told, we'd never be able to overcome such grievous sorrow.' 2255

Hagen of Tronege replied: 'What you say is no lie. How gladly I would grant you that the messenger had deceived you, for love of Rüedeger, and that he were still alive! Both men and women may weep forever over his loss!' 2256

When they heard for certain that he was dead, the warriors mourned him as their loyalty demanded. Tears were seen to fall down the beards and chins of Dietrich's warriors—great sorrow had
2257 befallen them. Sigestap,* the Duke of Bern, then said: 'Now all the ease is at an end which Rüedeger brought about for us after our days
2258 of hardship. The joy of exiles lies slain by you heroes.'

Then Wolfwin,* the warrior of the Amelungs, said: 'Even if I were to see my father dead today, I would never grieve more than for
2259 Rüedeger. Alas, who now is to console the worthy margrave's wife?'

Then Wolfhart the warrior, angry in his mind, said: 'Who now is to lead the warriors on so many a campaign as the margrave has done time
2260 and again? Alas, most noble Rüedeger, that we have thus lost you!'

Wolfprant* and Helpfrich, and also Helmnot,* along with all their friends, wept over his death. Hildebrant could put no further questions, so heavily did he sigh. He said: 'Do now, you warriors,
2261 what my lord has sent you for.* Hand over Rüedeger to us out of the hall, dead as he is, he with whom our joy has all fallen to grief. Let us repay him for all that he ever did for us, the great loyalty
2262 that he showed us and many another man. We are also exiles, as was Rüedeger the warrior. Why are you keeping us waiting? Let us bear him away, so that we may yet reward him after his death. It would
2263 have been just if we had done so in his lifetime.'

King Gunther replied: 'Never was service so good as that which a friend renders his friend after his death. That I call constant loyalty, if a man can fulfil it. You are right to reward him—he acted kindly
2264 towards you.'

'How long are we to plead?' said Wolfhart the warrior. 'Now that our best hope lies dead at your hands, and we must, sadly, do without
2265 him, let us carry him away so that we can bury the warrior.'

Volker answered: 'No one will give him to you. If you take him from the hall where the warrior lies, fallen with mortal wounds into
2266 the blood, that would be paying full homage to Rüedeger.'

Bold Wolfhart then said: 'God knows, sir minstrel, there is no need for you to provoke us! You have brought us sorrow. If I dared, despite my lord's command, you'd meet with peril for this. We must
2267 let it be now, for he forbade us to do battle here.'*

The fiddler replied: 'That fear is too great by far if a man wants to renounce all that is forbidden him. I cannot call that a true hero's
2268 spirit.' Those words of his companion-in-arms seemed good to Hagen.

'Do not be so eager!' answered Wolfhart. 'I'll so disarrange your strings that when you ride back to the Rhine, you'll have a fine tale to tell. I cannot in all honour put up with your haughtiness.' 2269

The fiddler replied: 'If you ever rob my strings of sweet melodies, your helmet's bright sheen must be dimmed by my hands, whether or not I ride back to Burgundy.' 2270

Wolfhart wanted to leap at him then, but Hildebrant, his uncle, did not let him, grasping him firmly in his arms. 'I believe you wanted to go berserk in your foolish anger. You would have forfeited my lord's favour forever.' 2271

'Let the lion loose, master—he is so fierce! Yet if he falls into my hands,' said Volker, that worthy warrior, 'even if he had slain all the world with his hands, I'll strike him such a blow that he'll never be able to tell the tale.' 2272

The man of Bern was greatly enraged at that. Wolfhart, that bold, worthy warrior, grabbed his shield. Like a wild lion he ran in ahead of them. His friends made haste to follow him. Though he took 2273 great leaps towards the wall of the hall, old Hildebrant caught up with him in front of the stairs. He did not want to let him enter battle before him. They were to find what they sought at the foreigners' hands. Master Hildebrant leapt at Hagen then. The swords in their 2274 hands were heard to ring out. They were in a great rage, as could soon be perceived. Fiery red sparks blazed from their two swords. In the 2275 heat of the battle they were then parted. That was the doing of the men of Bern, so strong were they. Hildebrant at once turned away from Hagen. Then strong Wolfhart ran at bold Volker. He struck 2276 the fiddler such a blow on his sturdy helmet that the sword's blade pierced its straps. The bold minstrel paid him back courageously. He struck Wolfhart such a blow then that he sprayed sparks. They 2277 hewed ample fire out of their chainmail. Each bore the other great hostility. Then Wolfwin, the warrior of Bern, parted them. If he had not been a hero, that could not have happened. 2278

Gunther the warrior welcomed the famed heroes from the land of the Amelungs with a most willing hand. Lord Giselher rendered great numbers of bright visors red and wet with blood there. 2279 Dancwart, Hagen's brother, was a grim foe. All that he had done before in battle against Etzel's warriors was but a trifle. Bold Aldrian's son fought in a great rage now. Ritschart* and Gerbart,* Helpfrich 2280 and Wichart,* had seldom spared themselves in many onslaughts,

as they made Gunther's vassals well aware. Then Wolfprant was seen
2281 to stride proudly into battle. Old Hildebrant fought as if he were berserk. Wolfhart's hands caused many worthy warriors to fall dead into the blood by his sword's blows. Thus the bold and worthy
2282 warriors avenged Rüedeger.

Lord Sigestap then fought as his courage counselled him. Ah, what good helmets of his foes Dietrich's sister's son hewed to pieces in
2283 that onslaught! He could never have fought better than in that battle!

Mighty Volker, that hero, when he beheld that bold Sigestap hewed such a bloody brook out of hard mail, grew angry. He leapt
2284 towards him—swiftly then Sigestap lost his life at the hands of the fiddler there! He granted him such a share of his art there that he lay dead by his sword.

2285 Old Hildebrant avenged that, as his valour demanded of him. 'Alas for my dear lord,' said Master Hildebrant, 'who lies slain here by Volker's hand! Now the fiddler shall live no longer!' Bold
2286 Hildebrant, how could he ever be fiercer? He struck Volker such a blow then that the bold minstrel's helm-straps flew up in all directions against the wall of the hall, both from his helmet and his shield.
2287 By that mighty Volker met his end there.

Then Dietrich's men forced their way into the battle. They struck such blows that rings of mail flew far off, and the points of swords were seen to fly high in the air. They fetched a hotly flowing brook
2288 from the helmets.

Then Hagen of Tronege saw that Volker was dead. That was his greatest anguish of all at that festivity, of all that he had gained among his kinsmen and vassals there. Ah, how hard Hagen then set
2289 about avenging the hero! 'Now old Hildebrant shall not profit by this! My helper lies slain by that hero's hand, the best companion-in-arms I ever had!' He raised his shield higher—he then strode
2290 off, hewing about him.

Mighty Helpfrich slew Dancwart. Gunther and Giselher were full of grief when they saw him fall in the heat of the battle. He had fully
2291 requited his death by his deeds.

Meanwhile Wolfhart strode back and forth, hewing at Gunther's men all the time. He had made his third turn through the hall,
2292 great numbers of warriors falling at his hands. Then Lord Giselher shouted at Wolfhart: 'Alas that I ever won so fierce a foe! Noble, bold knight, turn to face me now! I want to help end this—it cannot

last longer!' Wolfhart turned towards Giselher to do battle. Each 2293
of them then struck one another great numbers of gaping wounds. Wolfhart pressed forward so strongly towards the king that the blood leapt up from beneath his feet, all over his head. With fierce, grim 2294
blows fair Uote's son then welcomed Wolfhart, that bold hero. Strong as the warrior was, he could live no longer. No king so young could ever have been bolder. He struck such a blow at Wolfhart through 2295
his stout breastplate that the blood flowed down from his wound. He dealt Dietrich's vassal a mortal wound. No one except that warrior could have done that. When bold Wolfhart realized he was 2296
wounded, he let his shield fall. Higher in his hand he raised a mighty sword—that was sharp enough! With a blow that pierced both his helmet and mail the hero then slew Giselher. They had both dealt 2297
one another grim death.

None of Dietrich's men were left alive then. Old Hildebrant saw Wolfhart fall. No such true sorrow, I believe, ever befell him as long as he lived. All Gunther's men had then died, as well as those of 2298
Dietrich. Hildebrant walked over to where Wolfhart had fallen down into the blood. He took the bold and worthy warrior into his arms. 2299
He wanted to carry him out of the hall with him. Wolfhart was somewhat too heavy—he had to leave him lying there. The dying man then glanced up at him out of the blood. Wolfhart saw clearly that his kinsman would gladly have helped him away from there. The 2300
mortally wounded man then said: 'My dearest uncle, you cannot help me at this time. Be on your guard against Hagen now—I think that good counsel. He is grim of heart. If my kinsmen want to mourn over 2301
my death, then you must tell my nearest and best not to weep for me—there is no need. I lie dead here in splendour, killed by a king's hands. Moreover, I have taken such toll for my death in this hall 2302
that worthy knights' wives may have good reason to weep over it. If anyone asks you, then you can readily say that a good hundred lie slain by my hands alone.' 2303

Then Hagen's thoughts turned again to the bold minstrel, whose life bold Hildebrant had taken. He said to that warrior: 'You will pay for my sorrows. You have robbed us in here of great numbers of gallant warriors.' He struck such a blow at Hildebrant that Balmunc 2304
was clearly heard to ring out there, the sword that bold Hagen took from Sivrit when he slew the hero. The old man defended himself—he had ample courage! 2305

Dietrich's warrior struck a blow with his broad sword upon the hero of Tronege, a blow that cut very deep. Yet he could not wound Gunther's vassal. Then Hagen, in return, struck him through his fair
2306 breastplate. When old Hildebrant realized he was wounded, he feared more harm at Hagen's hands. Dietrich's vassal threw his shield over
2307 his back. Deeply wounded, the hero then ran away from Hagen.

None was left alive there of all those warriors except those two alone, Gunther and Hagen. With the blood running from him, old
2308 Hildebrant walked away. He took grievous tidings over to Dietrich.

He saw him sitting there in sadness. The prince then gained even greater grief. He saw Hildebrant in his red breastplate. He asked him
2309 for tidings then, as anxiety compelled him: 'Now tell me, master Hildebrant, why are you so wet with heart's blood? Or who has done this to you? I believe you have fought with the guests in the hall. I forbade you to do so strongly—you ought rightly to have
2310 refrained from this.'

Then he said to his lord: 'It was Hagen who did this. He struck me this wound in that chamber when I wanted to turn away from that
2311 warrior. I barely escaped with my life from that devil.'

Then the Lord of Bern said: 'You have met with your just deserts, since you heard me aver friendship to those warriors—that you should break the truce I had given them! If it were not to disgrace
2312 me forever, you would lose your life for this!'

'Now do not be so angry, my lord Dietrich. The harm that has been done to me and my friends is all too great. We wanted to carry
2313 Rüedeger away. King Gunther's men would not grant us leave.'

'Woe is me for such sorrow, if Rüedeger is indeed dead! This must be grief to me above all other anguish of mine. Noble Gotelint is my
2314 aunt's daughter. Alas for the poor orphans left there in Pöchlarn!' Rüedeger's death then recalled to him loyalty and grief. He began to weep sorely, as the hero had good cause to do: 'Alas for the loyal
2315 help I have lost! I'll never overcome the death of King Etzel's vassal. Can you tell me for certain, master Hildebrant, who was the warrior who slew him there?'

Hildebrant said: 'It was mighty Gernot in his strength. At
2316 Rüedeger's hands that hero also lies dead.'

Dietrich said to Hildebrant: 'Now tell my men to arm themselves speedily, for I want to go there. And have my bright battle-gear
2317 brought. I myself will put questions to the heroes from Burgundy.'

Master Hildebrant replied: 'Who is to join you? What men you have who are still alive you see standing by you. I mean myself alone—the others are dead.'

Dietrich was shocked at these tidings, as he had every cause to be, for he had never gained such great grief in this world. He said: 2318
'If all my men are dead, then God has forgotten me, wretched Dietrich! I was a proud king, possessing great power and wealth. 2319
How could it come about', Dietrich continued, 'that they have all been killed, those renowned heroes, by the battle-weary Burgundians, for they were in such peril? Were it not for my ill-fortune, death would still be a stranger to them. Since my evil fate will spare me this 2320
no longer, tell me, is any of the guests still alive?'

Master Hildebrant replied: 'As God is my witness, no one except Hagen alone, and Gunther the proud king.' 2321

'Alas, dear Wolfhart, that I should have lost you! I have good cause to regret that ever I was born! Sigestap and Wolfwin, and Wolfprant, too! Who now is to help me return to the land of the Amelungs? 2322
If my valiant Helpfrich is slain, Gerbart and Wichart, how am I to overcome their loss? This, for me, is the last day of my happiness. Alas that no one can die of grief!' 2323

THIRTY-NINTH ADVENTURE

HOW SIR DIETRICH FOUGHT WITH GUNTHER AND WITH HAGEN

THEN Lord Dietrich himself sought out his armour. Master Hildebrant helped him arm himself. The mighty man lamented then so sorely that the hall echoed with the sound of his voice. Yet then 2324
he regained a true hero's spirit. The worthy hero was armed in grim earnest. He took a sturdy shield in his hand. They soon set off, he and Master Hildebrant. 2325

Hagen of Tronege then said: 'I see Lord Dietrich walking towards us. He wants to attack us after the great sorrow that has befallen him here. Today we shall see who is to be reckoned the best. No matter 2326
how strong and how fearsome Lord Dietrich of Bern thinks himself, if he wants to wreak vengeance upon us for what has been done to him,' said Hagen, 'I have no fear of taking him on.' 2327

Dietrich and Hildebrant heard what he said. Dietrich went over to where he found the two warriors standing outside the hall, leaning
2328 against the wall. Dietrich laid his good shield down at his feet. Full of sorrow, Dietrich then said: 'Why have you acted thus, Gunther, powerful king, towards me in my exile? What wrong had I done you?
2329 I am bereft of all my hopes. You did not think our great anguish enough when you slew Rüedeger the hero. Now you have begrudged
2330 me all my men. I had not inflicted any such harm on you heroes. Think of yourselves and your grief, the death of your friends and your suffering—does it trouble your minds at all, worthy warriors?
2331 Alas, how deeply Rüedeger's death grieves me! No greater grief ever befell any man in this world. You paid little heed to my woes and to your own. All those who brought me joy lie slain by you. I can never
2332 cease to lament over my kinsmen.'

'We are not so very much to blame,' replied Hagen. 'Your warriors walked to this hall, armed from top to toe, with such a large company. It seems to me that you have not been told the truth of the
2333 matter.'

'What else am I to believe? Hildebrant told me that when my warriors from the land of the Amelungs asked that you should hand them Rüedeger's body out of the hall, you hurled nothing but scorn
2334 down at the bold heroes.'

Then the King of the Rhine said: 'They said that they wanted to carry Rüedeger's body away. I ordered that he be denied them,* as an affront to Etzel, and not to your men, but then Wolfhart started
2335 to hurl abuse at us.'

Then the hero of Bern said: 'There is nothing else for it. Gunther, noble king, by your courtesy make me amends for the sorrows that have befallen me at your hands, and atone for them, bold knight, in
2336 such a way that I can acknowledge it. Surrender yourself to me as my hostage, you and also your vassal. I will then prevent, as best as I may, anyone from harming you here among the Huns. You will find
2337 nothing but loyalty and goodwill in me.'

'Now God in Heaven forbid,' said Hagen then, 'that two knights should surrender themselves who still stand armed before you, ready
2338 to defend themselves, and still walking free before their foes.'

'You must not refuse this,' were Dietrich's words. 'Gunther and Hagen, you have both grieved my heart and mind so sorely—if you
2339 would make amends to me, that would be right and proper. I swear

to you by my good faith, and give you my hand on it, that I will ride with you, home to your land. I'll escort you honourably or die for it, and will, for your sake, forget my grievous anguish.' 2340

'Have no further thought of that!' replied Hagen. 'It would ill befit us if the tale were to be told that two such bold men surrendered themselves to you. We see no one standing at your side now, except Hildebrant alone.' 2341

Then Master Hildebrant said: 'God knows, Sir Hagen, if anyone offers to agree upon a truce with you, the time may yet come when you would gladly have accepted it. You would do well to accept my lord's truce.' 2342

'Indeed, I would rather accept such a truce,' replied Hagen, 'than flee in such disgrace from a chamber as you, Master Hildebrant, have done here. I would have thought that you could have stood up better against your foes.' 2343

Hildebrant answered: 'Why do you reproach me for this? Now who was it who sat upon a shield before the Waskenstein, when Walther of Spain slew so many of his friends?* You yourself still have plenty to prove.' 2344

Then Lord Dietrich said: 'It does not befit heroes to scold one another like old women. I forbid you, Hildebrant, to say anything more. Grievous sorrows oppress me, exiled warrior that I am. Let me 2345 hear,' Dietrich went on, 'warrior Hagen, what you two bold knights were saying when you saw me approach you, armed? You averred that you alone would take me on in single combat.' 2346

'Indeed, no one will deny to you', said Hagen the warrior, 'that I'm willing to try battle with you here, with mighty blows, unless Nibelunc's sword should be shattered in my hands. It angers me that we two are wanted as hostages here.' 2347

When Dietrich heard how grim Hagen's mood was, the bold and worthy warrior was quick to seize his shield. How swiftly Hagen leapt down the steps towards him! Nibelunc's good sword rang out loudly as it struck down upon Dietrich. Sir Dietrich knew well that 2348 the bold warrior was full of ferocity. The Lord of Bern raised his shield to protect himself against perilous blows. He knew Hagen, that most gallant warrior, well. Moreover he feared Balmunc, that sword 2349 of great strength. Now and then Dietrich struck cunning blows in return, until, despite all, he overcame Hagen in battle. He struck him a wound which was deep and long. 2350

Then Lord Dietrich thought: 'You are exhausted by the peril you have endured. I'd gain little honour if you were to lie dead before me. I'll try if I can compel you to be my hostage.' That was done with
2351 difficulty. He let his shield fall. His strength was immense. He clasped his arms about Hagen of Tronege. Thus the bold warrior was then
2352 vanquished by him. Noble Gunther was saddened by that.

Dietrich then tied Hagen in bonds and led him to the noble queen, and handed over to her the boldest warrior who ever bore a sword.
2353 She was amply pleased after the great grief she had suffered.

In joy Etzel's wife bowed to the warrior: 'Blessed forever be your body and soul! You have made good amends to me for all my anguish.
2354 I shall forever seek to repay you, unless death forestalls me.'

Then Lord Dietrich said: 'You must let him live, noble queen, and if that may still be, how well he will atone to you for the wrongs he has done you! He must not pay the price for your seeing him standing
2355 in bonds.'

She then had Hagen led to no comfortable place, where he lay locked up and no one could see him. Gunther, that noble king, called out then: 'Where has the hero of Bern gone? He has done me
2356 wrong!'

Lord Dietrich strode towards him then. Gunther's valour was of great renown. He waited no longer then, but ran out of the hall. Loud
2357 clamour arose from the clash of their two swords. Although Lord Dietrich had long been renowned, Gunther was greatly enraged and berserk, for after such great grief Dietrich was his heart's foe.*
2358 They still account it a marvel that Sir Dietrich then survived. They both possessed great courage and strength. The palace and towers echoed with the sound of their blows, as they hewed with their swords
2359 on their good helmets. King Gunther was in fine fettle.

Yet the Lord of Bern afterwards overcame him, as he had done Hagen before. They saw the blood flow through the hero's mail because of the sharp sword that Dietrich bore. Sir Gunther had
2360 defended himself in renowned fashion, weary as he was. That lord was tied up by Dietrich's hands, though kings should never suffer such bonds. He thought that if he let them go free, the king and his
2361 vassal, all that they found would have to die at their hands.

Dietrich of Bern took Gunther by the hand; he then led him in bonds over to Kriemhilt. His suffering then dispelled many of her
2362 sorrows. She said: 'Welcome, Gunther of Burgundy!'

He said: 'I would bow to you, my dearest sister, if your greeting might be more gracious. I know, queen, that you are of so wrathful a mind that you will greet myself and Hagen sparingly.' 2363

Then the hero of Bern said: 'Most noble king's wife, there were never any greater hostages, never any such worthy knights, than these I have given you, noble lady. Now you must let these foreigners benefit by me.' 2364

She said she'd willingly do so. Then Sir Dietrich, tears in his eyes, walked away from those renowned heroes. Afterwards Etzel's wife took cruel revenge. She took the lives of both those excellent knights. 2365

She had them lie separately, to cause them discomfort, neither of them ever beholding the other thereafter, until she took her brother's head before Hagen. Kriemhilt wrought ample vengeance upon them both. 2366

Then the queen went over to Hagen. With what great hostility she spoke to the hero! 'If you will give me back what you have taken from me, you may yet return alive, home to Burgundy.' 2367

Grim Hagen replied: 'These are wasted words, most noble queen. Indeed I have sworn that I will not show where the hoard lies as long as any of my lords lives, and shall give it to no one.' 2368

'I'll put an end to this,' said the noble woman. She gave the order that her brother be put to death. They struck off his head. Taking hold of it by his hair, she took it before the hero of Tronege. He was greatly grieved then. 2369

When he saw his lord's head, the angry warrior said to Kriemhilt: 'You have put an end to things as you wished, and it has all turned out as I had thought. Now the noble King of Burgundy is dead, along 2370 with young Giselher, and also Sir Gernot. No one knows now where the treasure is except God and myself—it will be well hidden from you forever, she-devil!' 2371

She said: 'You have given me an ill reward, but I will at least keep Sivrit's sword. My dearly beloved wore it when I last saw him, when my heart's grief befell me by your doing.' 2372

She drew it from the scabbard—Hagen could not prevent it. Then, intent on robbing the warrior of his life, she raised it in her hands. She struck off his head. King Etzel saw that—he was greatly grieved. 2373

'Alas!' said the prince. 'How is it that the very best warrior that ever entered battle or bore a shield now lies dead at a woman's hands! Although he was my enemy, I am greatly grieved.' 2374

Then old Hildebrant said: 'She shall not profit by daring to slay him. No matter what happens to me in consequence, even though he brought me myself into dread peril, I will, nevertheless, avenge
2375 the death of the bold man of Tronege.' Hildebrant leapt angrily at Kriemhilt. He dealt the queen a blow with a swing of his heavy sword. Hildebrant caused her woe indeed. How could it help her that
2376 she screamed out so grievously?

Then all doomed to die there had fallen. The noble queen was hewn to pieces. Dietrich and Etzel began to weep. Fervently they
2377 mourned over both their kinsmen and vassals. Great glory lay dead there. All the people were in misery and anguish. Amid sorrow the king's festivity had ended, just as joy always, at the very end, yields
2378 to sorrow. I can't tell you what happened afterwards there, except that knights and ladies were seen to weep, and noble squires, too, for the death of their dear friends. Here this tale is at an end—that is
2379 *The Nibelungs' Doom.**

APPENDIX I

HISTORY AND LEGEND

It is a commonplace of the evolution of heroic epic that historical events are telescoped, reshaped, and distorted. Looking back to the Latin historiography concerned with the fifth and sixth centuries, we find little basis for the plot of the *Nibelungenlied*. A number of proper names can be identified with varying degrees of certainty. In the *Lex Burgundionum*, which dates back to the early sixth century, the author King Gundobad refers in the section *De libertatibus servorum nostorum* to his ancestors, naming Gibica, Gundomaris, Gislaharius, and Gundaharius.[1] The first of these enters legend as Gibeche. A fifteenth-century modernization of the *Nibelungenlied* identifies Gibich as Gunther's father,[2] whereas in our thirteenth-century text Dancrat is named as the father of Gunther and his brothers, and Gibeche is a king at the court of the Huns, one of the assembly that greets Kriemhilt at Tulln. Gislaharius and Gundaharius are readily identifiable as Giselher and Gunther; Gundomaris may correspond to Gernot.

The East Germanic tribe of the Burgundians appears to have moved west from the Rhine area; there have been attempts to link them with Worms, but there is no sound historical or archaeological evidence. As they pressed further west, they came into conflict with the Roman Empire. The accounts of the destruction of the Burgundians in the Late Antique chronicles are brief and somewhat conflicting. The anonymous Gallic Chronicle of 452 records how in the year 436 a memorable war against the Burgundians was fought, which led to the destruction of almost all the tribe and their king, at the hands of the Roman general Aetius.[3] Prosper's *Epitoma Chronicon* was composed between 435 and 455. It dates the battle

[1] *Leges Burgundionum*, ed. Ludwig Rudolf von Salis, MGH *LL*, Sectio I, vol. 2,1 (Hanover, 1892).

[2] George Gillespie, *A Catalogue of Persons Named in German Heroic Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 31.

[3] Richard Burgess, 'The Gallic Chronicle of 452: A New Critical Edition with a Brief Introduction', in Ralph W. Mathisen and Danuta Schanzer (eds.), *Society and Culture in Late Antique Gaul* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 52–84 (p. 79).

to 435 and goes into more detail, emphasizing the role of the Huns: 'At the same time Aëtius crushed Gundichar, who was king of the Burgundians and living in Gaul. In response to his entreaty, Aëtius gave him peace, which the king did not enjoy for long. For the Huns destroyed him and his people root and branch.'[4] Thirdly, there is the chronicle of Hydatius, written in 468/9, which dates the battle to 436: 'The Burgundians who had rebelled were vanquished by the Romans under the leadership of Aëtius.'[5]

None of these accounts links the destruction of the Burgundians with Attila the Hun (d. 453), who invaded Gaul with a huge army in 451.[6] Attila corresponds to Etzel in the *Nibelungenlied*, but the geography of events in the poem is diametrically opposed to that of the Hunnish invasion. Nor does Attila's death by suffocation, after he had added to his wives a girl called Ildico (perhaps a Germanic name), have any correspondence to the events at the end of the *Nibelungenlied*. Blœdel(in), Attila's brother, who is killed by Dancwart in the lay, corresponds to the historical figure of Bleda, who, according to the historian Jordanes, was murdered by Attila, his younger brother, *c*.445.[7] The poet borrows historical names, but assigns to them an entirely different function from that suggested by historical record.

Brunhild (Brunihildis, Brunichild) is well attested historically, the two main sources being Gregory of Tours's *Decem libri historiarum* (translated by Lewis Thorpe as *The History of the Franks*) and the *Chronicle Attributed to Fredegar*, which dates from *c*.660; the latter draws heavily for its account of Brunhild on the *Vita Columbani*, written *c*.640. Neither of these offers a continuous narrative; the latter is much more negative in its portrayal of Brunhild, describing her as a 'second Jezebel'. There are few points of contact between this historical queen and the Prünhilt in the *Nibelungenlied*. Brunhild, according to Gregory of Tours, was the daughter of Athanagild, the Visigothic king of Spain. Like her fictional counterpart she

[4] A. C. Murray (ed. and trans.), *From Roman to Merovingian Gaul: A Reader* (Ontario, 2003), 69.

[5] Richard Burgess (ed. and trans.), *The Chronicle of Hydatius and the Consularia Constantinopolitana: Two Contemporary Accounts of the Final Years of the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 92.

[6] See Gillespie, *Catalogue*, 42.

[7] See ibid. 13.

married a Burgundian king, Sigibert, King of the Franks.[8] Sigibert was assassinated by emissaries of Fredegund, wife of his brother King Chilperic. George Gillespie thinks it 'very probable that the quarrel between the wife of Siegfried . . . and her brother's wife, which leads to Siegfried's murder, stems from the conflict between Brunihildis and Fredegunda after the murder of Brunihildis's husband, the Merovingian Sigebert, in 575, but the historical roles of the women have been reversed in epic tradition'.[9] Even such tentative speculation as this pushes against the limits of what is valid in drawing links between the historical sources and the evolution of the legend.

There are three points of contact between the historical accounts and the lay: (1) Brunhild marries into the Burgundian royal family; (2) her husband is called Sigibert, as is his son in Fredegar's account; the Sig- prefix is common in the Burgundian family, as it is in the *Nibelungenlied* in the family of Sivrit (a contraction of Sigfrit); (3) amid a general atmosphere of treachery, the historical Brunhild is responsible for several murders, while in the *Nibelungenlied* she is only (indirectly) responsible for one, that of Sivrit. The historical Brunhild meets with a grisly death, tortured for three days, then strapped side-on to an unbroken horse and cut to death by its hooves.[10] In the *Nibelungenlied* she merely fades from the scene after the murder of Sivrit.

Theodoric the Great, who figures in the lay as Dietrich von Bern (i.e. Verona), ruled the Ostrogothic Empire in Italy from 493 to 526, some forty years after the death of Attila. Dietrich's role as an exile at the court of Attila figures in the *Hildebrandslied*, the Old High German heroic lay which dates from the early ninth century. In the thirteenth century Dietrich becomes the hero of the cycle of heroic epics, the *Dietrichsepen*.

[8] Thorpe (trans.), *The History of the Franks* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 221.

[9] Gillespie, *Catalogue*, 21.

[10] *The Chronicle of Fredegar*, 35. Ian Wood attempts to draw a continuous narrative from the disparate sources in *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (Singapore: Longman, 1994), 126–36.

APPENDIX II

THE NORDIC SOURCES AND THE PROBLEM OF GENESIS

THE *Lay of the Nibelungs* has a large number of cognate texts which have been adduced in attempts to explain anomalies in the lay, and how it evolved. In this context it is only possible to scratch the surface. The main sources may be listed as follows:[1]

1. The *Prose Edda* of Snorri Sturluson (1179–1241) has a brief account of the story of Sigurd, Brynhild, Gudrun (who corresponds in the Norse sources to Kriemhilt), and Atli (Etzel), in its treatise on poetic diction, the *Skaldskaparmál*.

2. Poems in the Old Icelandic *Poetic Edda*, preserved in the Codex Regius, written down in the 1270s. These give accounts of Sigurd's upbringing and the slaying of the dragon Fafnir; his betrothal to Brynhild and his marriage to Gudrun must be inferred as having been recounted in some poems contained in leaves missing from the manuscript. When the manuscript resumes, it tells of Sigurd's death, instigated by his brothers-in-law, Gunnar and Högni. These short, often gnomic poems are *Grípisspá* (*Gripir's Prophecy*); *Reginsmál* (*The Lay of Regin*); *Fáfnismál* (*The Lay of Fafnir*); *Sigrdrífurmál* (*The Lay of Sigrdrifa*); *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu* (*Fragment of a Poem about Sigurd*).

A further group is concerned primarily with Gudrun and Brynhild in the aftermath of Sigurd's death: *Guðrúnarkviða in fyrsta* (*The First Lay of Gudrun*); *Guðrúnarkviða onnur* (*The Second Lay of Gudrun*); *Guðrúnarkviða in þriðja* (*The Third Lay of Gudrun*); *Sigurðarkviða in skamma* (*A Short Poem about Sigurd*), and *Helreið Brynhildar* (*Brynhild's Ride to Hell*). The prose passage called *Dráp Niflunga* (*The Death of the Niflungs*) relates to the second part of the *Nibelungenlied*, as does *Oddrúnargrátr* (*Oddrun's Lament*). These accounts contradict

[1] This list is indebted to Theodore M. Andersson, *The Legend of Brynhild*, Islandica, 43 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 20–2 and Carolyne Larrington, *The Poetic Edda*, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), xviii–xxi.

one another; the story of Sigurd does not emerge clearly from the Eddic verse.

A third group of poems tells of Gudrun and Atli. The oldest of these[2] is *Atlaqviða* (*The Lay of Atli*). This has a radically different slant to the *Nibelungenlied* on the treacherous invitation, which is issued by Atli to Gunnar and Högni. Atli wishes to obtain the treasure that had belonged to Sigurd. Gudrun avenges her brothers on Atli, killing him after slaughtering her children. *Atlamál in Grœnlenzco* (*The Greenlandic Poem of Atli*) is similar in plot, though Atli's lust for treasure is not present. (*Guðrunarhvöt* (*The Whetting of Gudrun*) and *Hamðismál* (*The Lay of Hamdir*) have little relevance to the *Nibelungenlied*, extending the story of Gudrun and her revenge over subsequent generations.)

3. *Þiðreks saga*. A Norwegian prose compilation, thought to date from *c.*1230–50, which claims to be modelled on a North German source, but also shows knowledge of the *Lay of the Nibelungs*. Its name derives from that of one of its heroes, Þiðrek, who corresponds to Dietrich in the *Nibelungenlied*. Grimhild, Hildibrand, Sigmund, Attila, and Rodingeir (Rüedeger) also figure in the saga. Hagen's killing of Grimhilt's son is one motif which is treated more fully in *Þiðreks saga*.

4. *Völsunga saga* (*The Saga of the Volsungs*). An Icelandic prose compilation, largely based on the Eddic poems and other lost oral traditions, but showing some knowledge of *Þiðreks saga*.

5. Faroese ballads collected in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bearing the collective name *Sjúrðarkvæði* (*The Poem of Sigurd*). Despite the lateness of these texts, arguments have been put relating them to the lost earlier forms of the legend.

All in all, the Nordic analogues seem to have developed within an independent oral tradition, until the Eddic poems came to be written down in the thirteenth century. They can cast some light on some motifs in the *Nibelungenlied*, yet differences are as apparent as similarities.

These and other texts, including the sixteenth-century German *Lied vom Hürnen Seyfried* (*Lay of Horny Seyfried*), have been adduced by the many scholars who have played the game of positing lost

[2] See Larrington, *Poetic Edda*, 210.

poems in attempts to chart the lay's genesis. There can be no doubt that both the story of Sivrit and that of Kriemhilt's revenge were in widespread circulation long before 1200. The Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf* shows an awareness of the story, when a skilled minstrel sings all he knows of Sigemund, the son of Wæls. He tells of how Sigemund slew the dragon and thus obtained the treasure-hoard, loading it on to a boat. Sigemund is praised as the most renowned warrior in the world (*Beowulf,* 875–900). The Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus tells us, in his *Gesta Danorum,* how in 1131 a Saxon singer warned Duke Knut of Denmark against a treacherous invitation by referring to the notorious perfidy of Grimhild against her brothers (Book 13, vi, 7). Saxo was writing *c.*1210, but shows an awareness that the tale of Kriemhilt's treachery was well attested in the past. Andreas Heusler, indeed, thought that the tradition available to Saxo may have been a source of the *Nibelungenlied*.[3]

Karl Lachmann, the great nineteenth-century editor of MHG texts, argued that the *Nibelungen Noth* (*The Doom of the Nibelungs*), as he named it, was an amalgam of some twenty lays.[4] This was refuted by the Swiss scholar Andreas Heusler (1865–1940), who argued that the lay had its origin in two distinct legends, a Brünhild saga and a Burgundian saga. Heusler drew up a family-tree of sources based on this distinction, arguing that the two legends, over a period of seven centuries, evolved through five stages, merging in the *Ältere Not* (*The Older Doom*), a postulated predecessor of the *Nibelungenlied* itself, which may have been composed in the mid-twelfth century.[5] Defining the length and nature of these hypothetical poems, and indeed their number, is a task which will continue to intrigue scholars. Heusler's ideas held sway for a long time; they are still being refined, and often refuted. The existence of two distinct branches of legend is strongly suggested by the Eddic lays, by *Beowulf*, and by Saxo Grammaticus, but we are left with what Andersson

[3] Andreas Heusler, *Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied. Die Stoffgeschichte des deutschen Heldenepos* (Dortmund, 1920; 6th edn. 1965). See Neil Thomas, 'The Testimony of Saxo Grammaticus and the Interpretation of the *Nibelungenlied*', *Oxford German Studies*, 20/21 (1991–2), 7–17.

[4] Karl Lachmann, 'Über die ursprüngliche Gestalt des Gedichts von der Nibelungen Noth' (Berlin, 1816); repr. in *Kleinere Schriften* (Berlin, 1876), 1–64.

[5] Heusler, *Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied*, 49.

rightly calls a 'maze of texts'.[6] It seems almost certain that the 'Last Poet' combined a number of shorter, earlier sources to forge his plot, but whether these sources were oral or written, German, Norwegian, or Icelandic, has led to much debate and will continue to do so. It seems probable that even *c.*1200 the *Nibelungenlied* was a 'labile' text. Writing made it less so, and thus the manuscripts show relatively little variation. What is clear is that neither the 'Last Poet's' plot, nor its Eddic analogues, have much foundation in the scanty historical data at our disposal. History served as a springboard for legend, which leapt in multifarious directions.

To illustrate how the Nordic material can elucidate the *Nibelungenlied*, one example may serve. Perhaps the most difficult motif that the *Nibelungenlied* poet has to explain away is Sivrit's taking of Prünhilt's ring and girdle, the first a symbol of betrothal or marriage, while taking the girdle symbolizes taking virginity. The exigencies of plot in the *Nibelungenlied* mean that it is not Sivrit, but Gunther, who takes Prünhilt's virginity, thus causing her to lose her superhuman strength, yet the taking of the ring and girdle is vital in that it leads to the quarrel between the two queens, Prünhilt's treachery, and the ensuing events in the second part of the poem. The poet can scarcely conceal his embarrassment at this action on Sivrit's part: 'I don't know if he did that out of his high spirits' (strophe 680).

A previous relationship between Sivrit and Prünhilt is hinted at in the lay, but never made explicit. When the wooing voyage to Iceland is planned Sivrit shows prior knowledge of Prünhilt, which leads to the ironic comment by Hagen: 'since he is so well acquainted with how things stand with Prünhilt' (strophe 331). Sivrit is well versed in the sea-routes to Iceland, and Prünhilt's retinue recognize him on the arrival of the four warriors, as does Prünhilt herself (strophe 419). The Icelandic analogues are far less reticent on this relationship. In *Völsunga saga* Brynhild loses her virginity to Sigurd, who makes his way through the wall of fire surrounding her hall. The couple are betrothed. In *Ragnars saga* or *The saga of Ragnar Lodbrok*, which is preserved in the same manuscript as *Völsunga saga*, they have

[6] Andersson, *The Legend of Brynhild*, 24. Andersson offers detailed summaries of the poems. Complete translations can be found in Larrington, *Poetic Edda*.

a daughter, Aslaug, who is in effect the heroine of *Ragnars saga*. The saga begins: 'Heimir heard the tidings of the death of Sigurd and Brynhild in Hlymdale; and their daughter Aslaug whom Heimir was fostering was then three winters old.'[7] Later Aslaug tells Ragnar that 'she was the daughter of Sigurd Fafnir's Bane and Brynhild, Budli's daughter. . . . she told him of the meeting of Sigurd and Brynhild on the rock, and of her begetting; "and when Brynhild was delivered a name was given to me and I was called Aslaug".'[8] Aslaug in turn gives birth to a son, Sigurd Snake-in-the-Eye, who proves a great hero. This typifies the way in which the Nordic material pursues its own routes, yet it helps explain the poet's dilemma, and perhaps Hagen's somewhat cryptic question, as he plots Sivrit's murder: 'Are we to breed bastards?' (strophe 867).

[7] Margaret Schlauch, *The Saga of the Volsungs; The Saga of Ragnar Lodbrok together with the Lay of Kraka*, Scandinavian Classics, 35 (New York, 1930; repr. New York: AMS Press), 185.

[8] Ibid. 213–14.

APPENDIX III

THE METRE OF THE *NIBELUNGENLIED*

MUCH scholarly attention has been paid to the form of the *Nibelungenlied*, as it has to all other aspects of the lay. The division into 'adventures' is well attested by the manuscripts. The strophic form consists of four lines. These each divide into half-lines, separated by a caesura. The end-rhyme has an *aabb* pattern, but there is also often internal rhyme, i.e. with the half-lines preceding the caesura rhyming. The way in which the feet are filled varies. Must commonly a foot consists of a trochee (/*). Ultimately the form goes back to Germanic alliterative verse, the long line of the *Hildebrandslied* (and of *Beowulf*). That alliteration is also frequent in the *Nibelungenlied* thus comes as no surprise.

The most idiosyncratic feature of the poem's form is the placing of four, rather than three, main stresses in the last half-line of the strophe. This is not consistent throughout the poem, but is present in the majority of strophes. It lends greater emphasis to the final line of the strophe and is often echoed in the content, coinciding with the epic prophecies, the harbingers of doom. The penultimate strophe may serve as an illustration, with the verse translation by Burton Raffel below:

Diu vil michel êre was dâ gelegen tôt.
die liute heten alle jâmer unde nôt.
mit leide was verendet des küniges hôhgezît,
als ie diu liebe leide z'aller jungeste gît.

All their once enormous honor was dead and gone
People everywhere shared the pain and grief.
Etzel's celebration ended in heavy sorrow
as love and joy have a way of doing, today becoming tomorrow.[1]

[1] Burton Raffel, *Das Nibelungenlied—Song of the Nibelungs* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006).

The metrical scheme of the MHG is as follows (′ denoting a stressed syllable, and * an unstressed syllable):

′*′*′* *′*′*′
′′*′* ′*′*′
′′*′* *′**′*′
′′*′* ′*′′*′

Raffel has boldly 'followed this pattern very closely throughout his translation'.[2] Yet the problem with a verse translation is that the exigencies of metre and the constant hunt for rhyme tend to lead the translator away from the sense of the original. Thus, while Helmut de Boor's edition of the *Nibelungenlied* remains the standard one, his verse translation into German fell on deaf ears.[3] Raffel's translation of the first strophe illustrates the problems:

We know from ancient stories filled with wondrous names
how heroes fought for glory, won their fight for fame,
their flowing feasts and pleasures, their tears, their moans, their mourning,
their noble quarrels and courage, and here once more is more of the same.

The closest roughly contemporary parallel to the metrical scheme is to be found in the lyrics of Der von Kürenberg, perhaps the oldest named German lyric poet. We know virtually nothing about his identity, but he is thought to belong to a group of Danubian poets who composed songs around the middle of the twelfth century. This dating is based on criteria of both style and content. The thirteen strophes attributed to Kürenberg employ the long line with a caesura and impure rhyme (assonance), features which are absent from the German lyric from *c.*1170 onwards, when pure rhyme and the tripartite form of the canzona, borrowed from the French *troubadours* and *trouvères*, begin to dominate. Kürenberg's lyrics, in contrast, are for the most part monostrophic vignettes. Generally his songs are free from the influence of courtly love, which established itself in the last quarter of the twelfth century, again under Romance influence. The females in Kürenberg's lyrics are forceful

[2] Ibid. 333.
[3] Helmut de Boor, *Das Nibelungenlied*. Zweisprachig. Herausgegeben u. übertragen. Sammlung Dieterich, vol. 250 (Leipzig: Dieterich'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1959).

and outspoken, in contrast to their later lyric counterparts. A further link with the *Nibelungenlied* is the probable Danubian provenance of Der von Kürenberg's lyrics. Most significantly, however, the last half-line of their strophes generally has four feet, as in the following monostrophic lyric in the female voice:

Ich stuont mir nehtint spâte an einer zinne,
dô hôrt ich einen rîter vil wol singen
in Kürenberges wîse, al ûz der menigîn.
er muoz mir diu lant rûmen, alder ich geniete mich sîn.

I stood late one night at a turret;
Then I heard a knight singing full well
in Kürenberg's melody, from out of the crowd.
He must leave my lands, or I'll have my way with him!

The metrical scheme is:

''*'* ''*'*
''*'* ''*
''*'* *'*'*'
*'**''* '*'*'**'

Kriemhilt's dream in the First Adventure has been compared with the most celebrated of Kürenberg's lyrics, the 'Falcon Song', which has the same metrical form:

I reared myself a falcon for more than a year.
When I had tamed him, as I would wish,
and I had bound his plumage well with gold,
he rose to a great height and flew into other lands.

Afterwards I saw the falcon, lovely in flight.
He wore silk ribbons on his legs,
and his plumage was all red gold.
May God send those together who would gladly be lovers!

It has even been suggested, in the constant search to identify the poet of the *Nibelungenlied*, that Der von Kürenberg might have been its author. The equation of the male lover with the (often phallic) falcon is, however, a common topos in medieval German literature.

From the Anglo-American point of view, the metrical scheme bears a resemblance to that obtaining in many of the ballads collected by Francis Child,[4] for example in one of the melodies to which the border ballad *Lord Bateman* (Child 53; also known in Scotland as *Young Beichan*) is sung, in the Aeolian mode.[5] A version sung by Campbell MacLean has the characteristic extra foot in the fourth line:

Lord Beichan was a noble lord,
A noble lord of high degree.
He set his ships upon the ocean;
Some foreign country he would go see.

The Child ballads, like the medieval lay, are in quatrains; the usual rhyme-scheme is *xaxa*, as above, or *aabb*. The extra length of the fourth line gives a sense of finality, of closure, underlining the end of the strophe as a unit, and matching the expectations of the audience.

[4] F. J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, 5 vols. (1882–98; repr. New York: Dover, 1965).

[5] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions*, 4th edn. rev. by Maud Karpeles (repr. 1965; Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1972), 29–30. Listen to: *Scottish Tradition 5: The Muckle Sangs. Classic Scots Ballads* (Edinburgh: School of Scottish Studies, 1975), band 3.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

5 *Adventure*: this has the sense, derived from Old French, of 'something that happens'. In effect, it comes to mean 'chapter' in the manuscripts of the *Nibelungenlied*.

Of Kriemhilt: this subtitle is not in the central manuscripts A, B, and C, but is to be found in D and d. The subtitles vary greatly in the manuscripts. I have followed those in the Bartsch/De Boor edition.

such marvels told: the Middle High German (MHG) poet employs the device of *apo koinu* here, linking two main clauses by the same object. A more literal translation would read: 'In ancient tales we are told many marvels, of renowned heroes, of great hardship, of joys, festivities, of weeping and lamenting, of bold warriors' battles you may now hear marvels told.' This programmatic first strophe is not in MS B.

noble maiden: a distinction is drawn between the young 'maiden', a virgin, and the 'woman', after her future marriage. The term *edel*, 'noble' is shifting in significance *c*.1200. Originally denoting high rank, it comes to mean 'noble of mind'.

in all the lands: probably a proverbial expression, though the poet may have in mind the constituent lands of the Holy Roman Empire.

margraves: counts of the marks or marches, border territories; by the twelfth century this had become a hereditary title.

6 *marshal . . . steward . . . cup-bearer . . . chamberlain*: these are the four highest offices at court, established in Ottonian times.

7 *without a guard*: or 'without supervision'. This courtly portrait of a safely guarded young prince contrasts starkly with Hagen's account of Sivrit's early adventures in the Third Adventure. See Introduction, p. xvii.

took sword: i.e. 'were knighted'.

8 *bohort*: a mounted charge carried out in teams.

travelling people: minstrels such as, perhaps, the author of the *Nibelungenlied*.

9 *noble love*: MHG *hôhe minne* usually refers to courtly love, a relationship that remains generally unfulfilled. Sivrit's love-life is complicated by the genesis of the poem. He is bent on marriage, but the ethos of courtly love influences his wooing. See Introduction, p. xvii.

10 *for whom my heart holds very great love*: love unseen, love at a distance, is a common topos in medieval literature. For example, in Book XIV of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, Gramoflanz expresses love for a lady he has never beheld, Itonje, sister of Gawan, his deadly enemy. Gramoflanz is not one to make things easy for himself.

10 *said King Sigmunt*: such double attribution of speeches is common in the *Nibelungenlied*.

with twelve others: MHG *selbe zwelfte* ought to mean 'with eleven others', but this is contradicted by strophe 64. Numbers in the poem should not be taken too literally.

grey and coloured garments: 'grey' refers to the fur of grey squirrels, 'coloured' to the same animal's stomach fur, which is white with black edges.

11 *spans*: a span is the breadth of an outstretched hand.

12 *turned his eye*: normally (but not invariably) the plural 'eyes' obtains in such MHG idioms. This may be a reference to Hagen's loss of one eye in battle against Walther of Spain, in the Latin poem *Waltharius*.

13 *Schilbunc and Nibelunc, those powerful king's sons*: the background is not explained, but Schilbunc and Nibelunc would appear to be the sons of the deceased King Nibelunc, who have subsequently quarrelled over their inheritance.

14 *was . . . to wear a crown*: a reference to Sivrit's earlier refusal to be king during his parents' lifetime (strophe 43).

16 *Uote's son*: here Gernot is probably meant, although MS C attributes the speech to 'Giselher the child'.

threw the stone . . . shot the shaft: knightly pastimes, equivalent to putting the shot and archery (or possibly throwing the javelin).

17 *rode into their lands*: to assert their authority and exercise justice.

18 *shield-rims*: or 'rims'—*pars pro toto* for a shield.

21 *squires drew away*: the younger members of the contingent form a separate company, not necessarily involved in the fighting.

Let bold Dancwart guard the young folk: this anticipates events in the Thirty-second Adventure.

with swords: after an inconclusive horseback joust, the antagonists fight on foot with swords. This is the customary pattern of combat in romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

22 *offered Sivrit his lands*: this is customary behaviour when a knight is defeated in the courtly romance.

twelve warriors: Sivrit's men are numbered separately.

23 *battlesome*: the word only occcurs here. Instances of *hapax legomenon* (nonce-words, unique readings) are rare in the *Nibelungenlied*, but the poet clearly enjoys employing them in his battle scenes.

battle-bold: another nonce-word.

29 *Whitsun morning*: Whitsun is the customary time for festivities in Arthurian romance, from Chrétien de Troyes onwards. The poet may well be conversant with the MHG adaptations of Chrétien by Hartmann

von Aue. Wolfram von Eschenbach, looking back towards Hartmann and Chrétien, writes: 'Arthur, the Mayful man—all that was ever told of him happened at Whitsun, or in May's flower-time.' (Wolfram von Eschenbach, *Parzival and Titurel*, trans. Cyril Edwards, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 118–19).

30 *a foolish hope. Yet if I am to be estranged from you*: the vocabulary ('foolish hope . . . estranged') is that of the courtly love-lyric (*Minnesang*).

painted on parchment by a masterly artist's skills: a similar image is employed of the hero of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*: 'As the adventure tells us, no artist of Cologne or Maastricht could have painted a better picture than of Parzival sitting upon the charger' (p. 67).

32 *in the forefront of her kinsmen*: the reading of MS C. B has 'in the presence of so many a hero'.

ducking behind shields: a defensive manoeuvre in battles fought on foot.

34 *anywhere else in the lands*: see note to p. 5 above.

heroes to lose their lives thereafter: an echo of the last line of the second strophe.

how things stand with Prünhilt: scholars have posited prior acquaintance between Sivrit and Prünhilt in an earlier version of the legend. There are some pointers to this in Old Icelandic sources. See Theodore M. Andersson, *The Legend of Brynhild*, Islandica, 43 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980), 31. It may be that Hagen's words have an undercurrent of irony here. See Appendix II.

35 *in warrior fashion*: as lone knights, not unlike the samurai in a different culture.

You must tell Gunther this: like modern-day sportsmen, characters in the *Nibelungenlied* are fond of referring to themselves in the third person.

37 *silk*: silk was comparatively rare in the early thirteenth century. There is early evidence for its presence in Bavaria in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*.

Zazamanc: the name of the land of Belacane in Book I of Wolfram's *Parzival*; the poet may be borrowing from Wolfram here. The green colour of emeralds also figures in *Parzival*.

fish-skins: another echo, perhaps, of *Parzival*. In Book XI the churl who threatens Gawan wears 'a surcoat and bonnet of fish-skin' (p. 240).

ermine skins: white ermine was regarded as valuable, but black furs, such as sable, even more so. See Elke Brüggen, *Kleidung und Mode in der höfischen Epik des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1989).

38 *vowed . . . taking Lady Kriemhilt's hand*: literally, 'vowed into Lady Kriemhilt's hand'. An oath-taking gesture rather than a mark of affection.

39 *famed*: an archaic epithet, MHG *mære*.

[Sivrit said]: the identification of the speaker is omitted in the text, as often happens in the *Nibelungenlied*.

40 *honoured by that*: Sivrit is leading Gunther's charger onto the beach, part of the pretence that he is Gunther's vassal. Despite his knowledge that this is merely a stratagem, Gunther feels flattered.

41 *Great numbers of bold warriors*: these are the male warriors in Prünhilt's retinue.

42 *ahead of this noble warrior who stands before me here . . . lord*: Sivrit's pretending to be Gunther's vassal means that Gunther stands before him, and etiquette would require him to be greeted first.

43 *a silken shift beneath her armour*: literally 'armour-shift', a word that only occurs here.

phellel-silk: a costly silk from the Arab world, met with several times in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*.

rink: the ring or circle for combat. In the courtly romance this is usually a round space close by the castle. A fine example survives at Abenberg in Bavaria, which is referred to in Wolfram's *Parzival*. The outlandish Icelandic games are deliberately cast in a very different mould from courtly tournaments, but the choice of the word *rink* shows the poet's awareness of the parallel.

44 *Azagouc*: an oriental country which figures in Book I of Wolfram's *Parzival*.

ingots: the original has *messe*, from Latin *massa*, a measurement of uncertain weight. Mowatt suggests 'a good half ton of metal'.

48 *severe gale*: a nonce-word in the original, *sunderstarc*, literally 'exceptionally strong'.

an iron pole: the pole or club, of wood or iron, is the customary weapon of the giant in medieval German literature.

a whip of gold in his hand: the whip or scourge is the customary weapon of the dwarf, both in the heroic epic and in courtly romances such as Hartmann von Aue's *Erec*.

49 *chastisement*: a rare pun on the part of the author. The MHG word *zuht* can mean 'good breeding', 'punishment', but also 'pulling'.

Clary: a mixture of wine, clarified honey, and spices. Both clary and candles occur in a hospitality scene in Wolfram's *Parzival* (p. 103), again suggesting influence.

50 *Giselher's vassal*: some manuscripts have 'Gunther's vassal', but A and B have Giselher. A feudal relationship between Giselher and Dancwart is also suggested by strophe 521.

51 *so generous a chamberlain*: it is uncertain whether this last sentence is in the mouth of the narrator or of Prünhilt.

52 *guarding their garments*: this seems at first an unlikely role for Hagen, but, looking forward, it may have cemented his close relationship to Prünhilt. This is left unstated.

said the worthy knight: the double *dicit*-formula, introducing and concluding Gunther's speech, occurs frequently in the poem.

54 *messenger's bread*: the customary reward given to messengers in medieval literature, even to those of high rank. For example, in Book I of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*, the burgrave of Zazamanc asks Queen Belacane for 'a costly messenger's reward' when he brings her the news that Gahmuret is to fight on her side.

riding out beyond Worms to the shore to meet him: riding out to meet guests is a common act of courtesy in medieval literature.

55 *its walls were all decorated*: presumably tapestries were hung upon the walls.

head-dresses: the head-dress is the mark of the married woman.

56 *farandine*: a blend of silk and wool or hair.

making his way to the shore: Gunther and Prünhilt have disembarked further upstream and ridden the last stretch towards Worms along the east bank, and are now about to be ferried across to the city on the west bank.

57 *hair-bands*: the hair-band or garland is the head-dress of an unmarried woman.

no trace of deception: like his contemporary, Wolfram von Eschenbach, the poet objects to the use of make-up.

58 *into the shade*: sunburn was frowned upon in the Middle Ages.

59 *brought the water*: it was the custom for the nobility in the Middle Ages to wash hands before and after eating.

the oath that your hand swore: oaths were sworn with accompanying hand-gestures. Hands might be clasped, or fingers held up.

ring: the circle around the couple is a legal confirmation of their marriage.

60 *the seat facing Gunther*: the seat opposite the host is one of special distinction, as at Victorian dinner-parties.

62 *he wore a crown that day*: the crown is worn in honour of the marriage of Gunther and Prünhilt.

64 *under the bedclothes*: the meaning is uncertain here. Hatto suggests 'behind the bed-curtains', but we know little of medieval bedding. Evidently, however, Gunther is intent on concealing Sivrit's stratagem from Prünhilt.

65 *monstrous desire*: Prünhilt's desire to leave the marriage unconsummated is meant.

65 *girdle . . . spirits*: the symbolism of the girdle is obvious. Hatto describes the narrator's comment as 'diplomatic ignorance'. This is the weakest point in the plotting of the *Nibelungenlied*, a relic of an older, more robust version of the epic. See Appendix II.

66 *learned of it*: the decision-making is Sivrit's own, Kriemhilt not being consulted—a reflection of the heroic ethos.

67 *samite*: a rich silk fabric, sometimes interwoven with gold, or a garment of the same. It occurs often in Wolfram's *Parzival*.

70 *Norway*: the land of the Nibelungs, the Netherlands, and Norway are fused as one indeterminate northern land-mass. This is the only reference to Norway in the poem.

80 *shrewish*: MHG *wortræze* occurs only here.

82 *stand in a circle*: the ring confers legality upon the oath.

breed bastards: literally, 'rear cuckoos'. It is not clear whether the reference is to Prünhilt's son, or to Sivrit himself. It seems probable that Hagen is alluding to the possibility of future impropriety on Sivrit's part.

83 *wondrously valiant*: the original has the unique compound *wundernküene* here.

84 *sent the squires ahead on the journey*: the 'squires' are the Burgundian support troops.

86 *bercelet*: a small hound, probably of the spaniel family, used in tracking.

88 *posted their relays*: relays were posted at points where the game 'was expected to pass, and at which fresh hounds were held' (David Dalby, *Lexicon of the Mediæval German Hunt* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1965), 286).

tasted its reward: a hound which has frequently tasted its reward at the end of a chase and is therefore experienced and keen. The reward would be to eat certain parts of the quarry, such as blood and intestines. (Dalby, *Lexicon*, 66.)

90 *panther's skin . . . sweet scent*: the sweet scent of the panther figures in medieval bestiaries, such as the thirteenth-century Oxford Bestiary (MS. Bodley 764): 'When [the panther] has eaten and is full, he hides in his lair and sleeps. After three days he rouses himself from sleep and lets forth a great roar; and out of his mouth comes a very sweet smell that seems to contain every kind of scent. When the other animals hear his voice they gather from far and near, and follow him wherever he goes on account of the sweetness of his breath' (*Bestiary. Being an English version of the Bodleian Library, Oxford M.S. 764*, trans. Richard Barber (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), 30).

drawn by an engine: presumably a spring-bow or crossbow. See Jim Bradbury, *The Medieval Archer* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1985), 8–11.

otter skin: this is something of a guess, as the MHG word *ludem* is only attested here.

93 *All those . . . accursed because of this*: Sivrit views the treachery as a hereditary disgrace.

96 *court clothes*: normally men would dress with extra care when they appeared before ladies at court.

helmets buckled on: or possibly 'their swords raised'. This phrase is problematic in the manuscripts.

97 *marked murderer*: the MHG has the unique word *mortmeilen*.

as also happened there: Dickens shows how long the folk-belief lasted: 'Pity there had not been a word of truth in that superstition about bodies bleeding when touched by the hand of the right person; you never got a sign out of bodies.' *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), ch. 3.

98 *suffer hardship*: this refers to the hardship of the wake over the corpse.

104 *giving him away*: some manuscripts have 'his handsome person' rather than 'him'; this half-line is metrically defective.

to kiss her: a formal kiss of reconciliation is meant.

105 *rod of gold*: an entirely blind motif. The rod or wand never recurs.

108 *whom you've seen here*: this is the first indication in the lay that Sivrit's travels had included Hungary.

that little might be taken from them: a hint at the fear of robbers on the roads. As the poet's contemporary, Walther von der Vogelweide, puts it: 'violence rides along the roads.' Chronicles confirm that in the years of the civil war between the Welfs and the Hohenstaufen (1198–1208), any journey was a hazardous undertaking.

the host: MHG *wirt* denotes both a host and the lord of a castle or household.

110 *the lands of the Huns*: in the Latin epic *Waltharius* Hagen is an exile at Attila's court.

for what he has done for our sake: another reference to how Hagen was treated as an exile at Attila's court, where Rüedeger must have been a fellow-exile.

111 *Without my allies' counsel*: this is a sign of the special favour accorded Rüedeger.

112 *Sir Gunther*: the epithet 'bold' is found in one group of manuscripts (AD). In others this half-line is metrically defective. Here I follow Bartsch's edition rather than de Boor's.

[Hagen replied]: as often in the original, the person speaking is not named.

113 *heartfelt love*: the term *herzeliebe* occurs in the contemporary love-lyric, for instance in the songs of the Austrian poet Walther von der Vogelweide, temporally and geographically close to the poet of the *Nibelungenlied*.

115 *from the Elbe to the Mediterranean*: the river topos is a common motif in MHG literature. Compare a lyric preserved in the *Carmina Burana*

manuscript of *c.*1230: 'If all the world were mine | from the sea to the Rhine | I would gladly renounce it | if only the King of England lay in my arms.' The king in question is probably Richard I of England, so the lyric is roughly contemporary with the *Nibelungenlied*.

116 *the noble prince's*: i.e. Gunther's.

120 *carried . . . shields*: the warriors carry shields for fear of ambush in Bavaria.

The lodgings there were emptied: presumably in anticipation of accommodating the guests.

Bishop Pilgrim: in the tenth century there was a bishop of Passau who bore the name Pilgrim; a cult of this bishop is attested in the late twelfth century. In *Diu Klage*, the lachrymose sequel to the *Nibelungenlied*, Bishop Pilgrim of Passau is named as the patron of a Latin version of the story. There have been attempts to identify the fictitious Pilgrim with Wolfger von Erla, bishop of Passau 1191–1204, later patriarch of Aquileia. Wolfger was one of the patrons of Walther von der Vogelweide, but whether he was also the patron of the poet of the *Nibelungenlied* is a matter for speculation.

121 *many splinters . . . from the warriors' hands*: the splinters are from the wooden lances of the jousting knights.

Botelunc's son: i.e. Etzel.

123 *Traismauer*: Traismauer is confused in the central manuscripts with Zeiselmauer.

124 *Wallachians*: Romance-speaking habitants of Romania.

Pechenegs: a Turkic people living in the Steppes between the sixth and twelfth centuries.

welcome the proud king here: here the translation follows Bartsch's reading in emphasizing the special importance assigned to Rüedeger. De Boor's reading is: 'the proud king wishes to welcome you here.'

128 *the queen's wealth*: here again the translation follows Bartsch, while de Boor has, less cynically, 'the good queen'. Strophe 2129 confirms Bartsch's interpretation.

129 *that he should kindly grant her*: the switch from direct to indirect speech is characteristic of the heroic epic, occurring also in the Old High German *Hildebrandslied*, the only heroic lay to survive from the Carolingian epoch.

132 *took their silver and garments from them*: another allusion to the notorious robbers of Bavaria.

willing to accept the clothes: usually minstrels, travelling people, are the recipients of such gifts rather than their generous donors.

134 *long-toothed in vengeance*: the original has the rare compound adjective *lancræche*.

135 *Rumolt's counsel*: this famous passage is alluded to in Book VII of Wolfram's *Parzival* (p. 178). See Introduction, p. xiii.

139 *The skiffs had been made ready*: these are the boats to transport the army to the east bank of the Rhine.

140 *Nibelunc*: from this point onwards the name Nibelungs (Nibelungen) is also applied to the Burgundians, as reflected in the titles of the poem: 'The Lay of the Nibelungs' or 'The Downfall of the Nibelungs'.

141 *floating . . . like birds on the waves*: the portrayal of the water-sprites is strikingly similar to that of Morgan le Fay in Hartmann von Aue's *Erec* (*c.*1180): 'Both in the air and on the ground | she could hover at rest, | living on the waves and beneath them' (5254–6).

142 *fierce sword-work*: literally, the ferryman suffers 'sword-fierce death'; *swertgrimmic* is a nonce-word.

144 *chapel-baggage*: portable chapels were set up in tents. Thus in Wolfram's *Parzival*, in Sir Gawan's train: 'Many a packhorse had to carry chapels and chamber-apparel' (p. 280). The compound *kappelsoum* here is, however, unique.

146 *Möhringen*: or Mehring? The identification is uncertain. Möhringen lies on the Danube below Pföring, near Tuttlingen. Großmehring is another possibility. The Danubian routes of the Nibelungs have been much discussed.

147 *Who held their chargers for them*: a reference to twelfth-century tournament practice. Squires would hold the knights' horses for them when they had been unhorsed.

ran at one another: the combat between Hagen and Gelpfrat follows that familiar from the tournament. An undecided joust on horseback is followed by hand-to-hand combat on foot.

148 *'I'll be the judge of that!'*: more literally, 'I shall be the one who parts them' or 'the umpire'. This is jousting terminology of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which goes together with the use of couched lances in this encounter.

150 *to meet the messenger*: a gesture of courtesy commonly found in courtly romance.

151 *counterfeit ladies' complexions*: as in strophe 592, the poet objects, like his contemporary Wolfram von Eschenbach, to the use of make-up.

152 *He seemed so fearsome . . . omitted to kiss him*: at the end of the Latin epic *Waltharius* Hagen has lost an eye in combat against Walther, which may explain his fearsome aspect. The Old Icelandic *Saga of Thidrek* characteristically goes into more detail: 'Högni, his [Gunnar's] brother, had black hair that hung down with some curl in it. He was long-faced, and had a large nose and hanging brows. His face was grim and he had only one eye. He was rather fierce and bold. He was tall and stout in all his limbs, and when he put on his armour, he was noble in appearance,

but still frightening' (Edward R. Haymes (tr.), *The Saga of Thidrek of Bern* (New York and London: Garland, 1988), 116).

153 *Ribald talk*: 'boisterous remarks', or perhaps 'merry ditties'. The involvement of Volker suggests an element of performance, and the word *sprüche*, 'sayings, remarks', can also denote songs. A few salacious ditties have survived from the pre-courtly (Old High German) period. Best-known of these is *Hirsch und Hinde* ('Hart and Hind'): 'Hart whispered | into hind's ear: | "D'you want more, hind?"' This is preserved, together with a melody, in a manuscript of *c*.900. These ditties might have been performed *sotto voce*, as opposed to Volker's public pronouncement that follows.

155 *Since the king had accepted gifts*: precedence obtains with regard to the giving and accepting of gifts, Gunther's acceptance preceding the offer made to his vassal.

Nuodunc's death: Nuodunc, son of Rüedeger, has been slain by Witege, an event alluded to in the Dietrich epics, in which Nuodunc is a supporter of Dietrich.

157 *Hildebrant of Bern*: Hildebrant is the hero of the only surviving Old High German heroic lay, the *Hildebrandslied*, preserved in a manuscript of the early ninth century. As in that lay, he is in the service of Dietrich of Bern (Verona), historically Theodoric the Ostrogoth (d. AD 526).

Wolfhart: in the Dietrich epics Wolfhart, son of Amelunc, is the hothead among Dietrich's vassals.

159 *this sword*: the sword is Balmunc, Sivrit's sword.

160 *Walther eloped with Hiltegunt*: Walther is the hero of the Latin lay *Waltharius* and the Old English lay *Waldere*, in both of which he elopes from Etzel's court with Hiltegunt.

162 *beneath their silk*: the manuscripts vary here, with only the later C group having 'silk'. Bartsch suggests that it is because of the armour beneath the silk that the Huns are so broad-chested.

163 *the harm and the loss*: the original has here a rhetorical device rare in the poem, *figura etymologica*. A literal translation would read: 'the harmful harm'.

the man of Spain: i.e. Walther. See note to p. 160 above.

164 *when a friend stands in friendship alongside a friend*: another instance of *figura etymologica*. This whole strophe has a proverbial ring.

jostle you: the jostling is standard court practice, but in this instance Volker fears there may be an attempt on the Burgundians' lives.

166 *beds*: the beds are communal rather than individual, as was customary in the Middle Ages.

171 *Schrutan and Gibeche*: in the Dietrich epic *Biterolf*, Schrutan is Duke of Meran, and both he and Gibeche are in Etzel's service.

Ramunc and Hornboge: these men of Etzel also figure in *Biterolf* and other Dietrich epics.

caparisons: the horses' cloth covering, often ornamental.

have a thrashing: the wording of the original is obscure at this point.

172 *thrust their chargers back*: the Burgundians are preparing to do battle on foot.

brought the water: see note to p. 59 above.

173 *Nuodunc's bride*: the MHG has *Nuodunges wîp*, 'Nuodunc's wife', which contradicts the description of her as a 'maiden'. De Boor suggests that *wîp* may mean 'destined wife' here, and this is confirmed by 'Nuodunc's bride' in strophe 1927. *Wîp | lîp* ('body, person, self') is one of the most common rhyme-pairs in the *Nibelungenlied*.

174 *your sister's son*: it was a common custom among Germanic peoples for a nephew to be brought up at his uncle's court.

175 *I was a small child when Sivrit lost his life*: this is at odds with the portrayal of earlier events. It is unlikely that Dancwart's words are spoken out of cowardice. More probably, this is a reflection of an earlier version of the poem.

178 *drink love*: de Boor, and following him, Hatto, see this as a reference to the Germanic custom of drinking to the memory of the dead. Whether or not this be the case, Hagen's words are certainly ironic.

179 *flung his shield onto his back*: the gesture denotes that Hagen has no further thought of defence, only attack.

181 *the devil of a lot*: or possibly 'the Devil's work'. Dietrich is rebuking his hot-headed follower, but whether he is objecting to his words or his lack of prowess is unclear.

to profit by that: the Hun hopes to escape incognito in Dietrich's company.

lays: a problematic term here, as a *leich* normally denotes, *c.*1200, a lengthy hymn. Possibly 'hymn' would be a closer translation.

183 *lodgings further off from the hall*: Volker's javelin is thrown to keep the Huns further away.

the people's protector: a title given to Etzel in recognition of his fame.

185 *reached for their swords*: this is a deviation from the customary sequence of battle *c.*1200, when mounted combat with couched lances was succeeded by sword-play. The javelins belong, perhaps, to an earlier age.

186 *Waske*: Walther uses the same sword in the Dietrich epic *Biterolf*.

the sword threshed about wildly in his hand: Sivrit's sword Balmunc seems to be acquiring a life of its own at this point.

deathly fierce: a compound, *mortgrimmec* in the original, which does not occur elsewhere.

187 *shifted his shield higher over his helmet-straps*: Irinc is attempting to protect himself from sword-blows coming from above.

190 *worthily*: the adverb varies in the three main manuscripts, and consequently in editions too. A has 'amicably', which echoes 'in friendship' in strophe 2092; C has 'well'; 'worthily' is based on B.

193 *spouse*: MHG *wine*, an archaic word for beloved or husband.

198 *must place their full trust in you*: a problematic line. De Boor argues that these words were spoken by Giselher in an older (now lost) version of the poem. Mowatt and Sacker see this as a 'momentary fusion of Gernot and Giselher into a sort of composite son-figure . . . helped by Rüedeger's distribution of gifts between them. Giselher gets his daughter, and becomes his son-in-law; Gernot gets his sword, and becomes symbolically his heir and superseder.' *The 'Nibelungenlied': An Interpretative Commentary* (Aylesbury: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 138.

200 *bright mail had to be discoloured*: as the two antagonists make their way to one another, anyone standing in the way is killed or wounded by a sword hewing through his mail.

down to his helmet-straps: Rüedeger had been holding his shield above his helmet to protect him.

201 *Alas for my brother*: this speech is generally attributed to Gunther.

202 *Helpfrich*: like many of the characters in the penultimate chapter, a familiar figure in the Dietrich epics, for example in *Alpharts Tod* and *Biterolf*.

203 *done us great service*: in the Dietrich epic, the *Rabenschlacht* (*The Battle of Ravenna*), Rüedeger mediates between Etzel and Dietrich when Etzel's sons, who were committed to Dietrich's care, are killed.

battle-bold: the compound only occurs here.

204 *Sigestap*: brother of Wolfhart, nephew of Hildebrant, a giant-killer in the Dietrich epics.

Wolfwin: another figure who would have been familiar to the audience from the Dietrich epics.

Wolfprant: brother of Wolfwin and Ritschart in the Dietrich epic *Biterolf*.

Helmnot: Helmnot of Tuscany figures in other Dietrich epics. In *Alpharts Tod* he is also one of Dietrich's men.

what my lord has sent you for: Hildebrant appears to be going beyond his instructions. This may hark back to an older version of the story.

forbade us to do battle here: again, there seems to be a discrepancy in the narrative here.

205 *Ritschart*: a figure in the Dietrich epics, brother of Wolfwin and Wolfbrant in *Biterolf*.

Gerbart: a figure in many Dietrich epics, brother of Wichart in *Biterolf*.

Wichart: a figure in many Dietrich epics, brother of Gerbart in *Biterolf*.

210 *I ordered that he be denied them*: this contradicts strophe 2264, in which it is stated that Gunther is at first willing to hand over Rüedeger's body, and it is Volker who refuses.

211 *when Walther of Spain slew so many of his friends*: in the medieval Latin *Waltharius*, which dates from the tenth (or possibly ninth) century, Hagen (Hagano) at first refuses to fight against his friend and fellow-exile Waltharius, although he is pressed to do so by Gunther (Guntharius). He does not actually sit on his shield, but the expression symbolizes his reluctance to do battle.

212 *his heart's foe*: the expression only occurs here.

The Nibelungs' Doom: this title, only formulated at the end of the poem, is well evidenced in the manuscripts.

GLOSSARY OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

THE spelling of proper names varies considerably in the manuscripts, and also in the principal edition used; an attempt at standardization has been made here. Personal names have for the most part been left in their original Middle High German forms, rather than being Wagnerized, as often happens, e.g. 'Siegfried', 'Brunhilde'. Place-names have been given their modern equivalents, e.g. Pöchlarn (MHG Bechelâren). Exceptions have been made, for example, with regard to Dietrich of Bern, whose toponymic is an integral part of his name; Theodoric of Verona would sound odd in the German context. Hagen remains Hagen of Tronege, given the uncertainty with regard to the place-name. Where the names differ from the standardized MHG spelling, the latter has been given in brackets. The circumflex denotes a long vowel. Otherwise vowels are pronounced short, except for diphthongs, where the main emphasis is on the first of the two vowels.

Albrich (*Albrîch*) a dwarf in the land of the Nibelungs
Aldrian (*Aldriân*) father of Hagen and Dancwart
Alzey town north-west of Worms, in the Rhineland Palatinate, home of Volker
Amelrich (*Amelrîch*) Bavarian vassal of Else, brother of the Danubian ferryman
Amelungs (*Amelungen*, also *der Amelungen lant*) dynastic name, and name of the realm of Dietrich of Bern
Arabia (*Arâbî*, *Arâbîn*) source of rich silks
Arras (*Arraz*) Flemish city, famed for textiles
Astolt lord resident in Melk
Austria (*Ôsterlant*, also *Ôsterrîche*)
Azagouc fictitious oriental country, source of silk, also in Wolfram's *Parzival*
Balmunc Sivrit's sword
Bavaria (*der Beyer lant*, *Beyerlant*, *Peyer lant*)
Bern home of Dietrich and Hildebrant (historically Verona). Dietrich is sometimes referred to as 'the man of Bern' (*der Bernære*), as is his vassal Wolfhart
Blœdelin (*Blœdelîn*; also *Blœdel*) of Hungary, brother of Etzel
Botelunc father of Etzel
Burgundians (*Burgonden*) inhabitants of Burgundy
Burgundy (*Burgonden lant*, *Burgonden*) kingdom of Gunther and his brothers

Dancrat (*Dancrât*) husband of Uote, father of the Burgundian kings
Dancwart son of Aldrian, Hagen's younger brother, marshal of the Burgundian kings
Danes (*Tenen*) men of Denmark (*Tenemarke*, *Tenelant*)
Danube (*Tuonouwe*) oft-crossed river
Denmark (*Tenemarke*, *Tenelant*) land of Liudegast
Dietrich of Bern (*Dietrich von Berne*) King of the Amelungs, in exile at Etzel's court (historically Theodoric the Ostrogoth)
East Franconia (*Ôstervranken*) on the Burgundians' route to Hungary
Eckewart Count and margrave of the Burgundians
Eferding (*Everdingen*) town near the south bank of the Danube in Upper Austria
Elbe name of the river
Else Lord of the march in Bavaria, on the southern bank of the Danube; brother of Gelpfrat
Enns (*Ense*) river in Upper Austria; also Austria's oldest town
Etzel King of the Huns (historically Attila the Hun)
Etzelnburc Etzel's residence in Hungary. Possibly Gran (Esztergom)
Gelpfrat (*Gelpfrât*) Margrave of Bavaria, brother of Else
Gerbart (*Gerbârt*) one of Dietrich's men
Gere (*Gêre*) Duke and margrave, kinsman of the Burgundian kings
Gernot (*Gernôt*) son of Dancrat and Uote, second of the Burgundian kings
Gibeche a Hunnish king at Etzel's court
Giselher (*Gîselher*) youngest of the Burgundian kings
Gotelint Margravine, wife of Rüedeger, cousin of Dietrich
Gran (*Etzelnburc*) town where Etzel is resident in the Twenty-fourth Adventure (Esztergom in Hungary)
Greece (*Kriechen*) Greek warriors are present at Etzel's court
Gunther son of Dancrat and Uote, eldest of the Burgundian kings
Gunther son of Sivrit and Kriemhilt
Hadeburc a water-sprite
Hagen(e) of Tronege (also *der Tronegære*) elder son of Aldrian, kinsman of the Burgundian kings
Hawart (*Hâwart*) of Denmark, an exiled prince in Etzel's retinue
Hainburg (*Heimburc*) unidentified town on the border between Hungary and Austria
Helche wife of King Etzel
Helmnot (*Helmnôt*) one of Dietrich's men; he figures in some of the Dietrich epics
Helpfrich (*Helpfrîch*) one of Dietrich's men
Herrat (*Herrât*) niece of Helche, daughter of Nântwin, bride of Dietrich

Hessen on the Burgundians' route to Saxony
Hildebrant of Bern. In exile at Etzel's court, in the service of Dietrich
Hiltegunt beloved of Walther of Spain
Hornboge Hunnish warrior in Etzel's retinue
Hun (*Hiune*) inhabitant of Hungary
Hungary (*Ungern*; also *der Hiunen lant*) land of King Etzel
Hunolt (*Hûnolt*) chamberlain of the Burgundian kings
Iceland (*Îslant*) realm of Prünhilt
India (*Indîâ*) source of precious stones
Inn (*In*) Bavarian river
Irinc (*Îrinc*) Margrave of Denmark, vassal of Hawart, in exile at Etzel's court
Irnfrit Landgrave of Thuringia, in exile at Etzel's court
Isenstein (*Îsenstein*) Prünhilt's Icelandic capital
Kiev (*Kiewen*) home of warriors in Etzel's retinue
Kriemhilt daughter of Dancrat and Uote, sister of the Burgundian kings
Liudegast King of Denmark, brother of Liudeger of Saxony
Liudeger (*Liudegêr*) King of Saxony, brother of Liudegast of Denmark
Lochheim (*Lôche*) place where the Nibelung treasure is sunk; possibly the hamlet of Lochheim in the Rhineland Palatinate
Lybia (*Lybîâ*, *Lybîân*) exotic source of silks
Main (*Meune*) river on the Burgundians' route to Hungary
Mautern (*Mûtâren*) town on the Danube in Lower Austria
Mediterranean (*daz mer*)
Melk (*Medelicke*) town on the Danube in Lower Austria
Metz (*Metz*(*e*)) home of Ortwin, now a French city
Misenburc possibly Wieselburg in Lower Austria
Möhringen (*Mœringen*) or Mehring? Or Großmehring? Town on the Danube
Morocco (*Marroch*) exotic source of silks
Näntwin (*Näntwîn*) father of Herrat
Netherlands (*Niderlant*) land of Sigmunt and Sigelint, and their son
Nibelunc King of the Nibelungs, father of the young kings Schilbunc and Nibelunc
Nibelunc son of the above
Nibelungs (*Nibelungen*) dynastic name of the people of Nibelunc; later a name given to the Burgundians
Nineveh (*Ninnivê*) Oriental city, source of precious silk
Norway (*Norwæge*) part of Sivrit's realms
Nuodunc kinsman of Gotelint (a figure in the Dietrich legends)
Ortliep ill-fated son of Etzel and Kriemhilt

Ortwin (*Ortwîn*) of Metz, nephew of Hagen, steward of the Burgundian kings

Passau (*Pazzouwe*) Bavarian city at the intersection of the Inn and the Danube, seat of Bishop Pilgrim

Pechenegs (*Petschenære*) warriors of Finno-Ugrian descent in Etzel's retinue. The Pechenegs lived in the steppes between the sixth and twelfth centuries

Pföring (*Vergen*) Bavarian town near the Danube

Pilgrim (*Pilgerîm*, *Pilgrîn*) Bishop of Passau, brother of Queen Uote

Pöchlarn (*Bechelâren*) seat of Margrave Rüedeger, on the Danube in Lower Austria

Poles (*Pœlân*) men in Etzel's retinue

Prünhilt Queen of Iceland

Ramunc (*Râmunc*) Duke of Wallachia, in Etzel's retinue

Rhine(land) (*Rîn*) the Rhine, the homeland of the Burgundian kings

Rhone (*Rote*) river Marking a boundary of Etzel's kingdom

Ritschart one of Dietrich's men

Rüedeger Margrave of Pöchlarn, vassal of Etzel

Rumolt (*Rûmolt*) Master of the kitchen in Burgundy

Russia (*Riuzen*) Russian warriors are present at Etzel's court

Saxons (*Sachsen*) enemies of the Burgundians

Saxony (*Sachsen*) the land of the Saxons

Sc(h)ilbunc son of Nibelunc

Schrutan (*Schrûtân*) Hunnish warrior at Etzel's court

Sig(e)lint wife of Sigmunt, mother of Sivrit

Sigelint a water-sprite

Sig(e)munt King of the Netherlands, father of Sivrit

Sigestap Duke of Bern, nephew of Dietrich. In other Dietrich epics a giant-killer, son of Amelunc and brother of Wolfhart

Sindolt cup-bearer of the Burgundian kings

Sivrit (*Sîvrit*, *Sîfrit*) son of Sigmunt and Sigelint of the Netherlands

Spain (*Spânje*) kingdom of Walther

Speier (*Spîre*) seat of a bishop

Spessart (*Spehtshart*) forest in central Germany

Swabia (*Swâben*) south-west Germany, on the route taken by Wärbel and Swemmel from Burgundy to Hungary

Swalefeld (*Swalevelt*) Swabian town on the River Swalb, a tributary of the Wörnitz

Swemmelin (also *Swemmel*, *Swämmelîn*) minstrel at Etzel's court

Thuringia (*Düringen*) land of Irnfrit, in central Germany

Traisen (*Treisem*) river in Lower Austria, tributary of the Danube

Traismauer (*Zeizenmûre*) town on the Traisen in Lower Austria, confused by the poet with Zeiselmauer in Upper Austria

Traun (*Trûne*) tributary of the Danube in Upper Austria

Tronege Hagen's birthplace, perhaps Burg Tronek in the Hunsrück. Hagen is sometimes called *der Tronegære*, 'the man of Tronek'

Tulln (*Tulne*) town on the Danube in Lower Austria

Uote queen, wife of Dancrat, mother of the Burgundian kings and Kriemhilt

Vienna (*Wiene*) Austrian city

Volker (*Volkêr*) of Alzey, fiddler, vassal of the Burgundian kings

Vosges (*Waskenwalt*; *Waskenstein*) forest and mountain in the north-east of France

Wallachians (*Walachen*) Romance-speaking warriors in Etzel's retinue, from Walachia, now part of Romania

Walther of Spain hostage at Etzel's court, hero of the Latin epic *Waltharius*

Wärbel (also *Wärbelin*, *Werbel*) minstrel at Etzel's court

Waske sword of Irinc of Denmark. In *Biterolf* it is the sword of Walther, perhaps because of the connection with the Waskenstein

Waskenstein a rock-face in the Vosges, scene of a battle involving Walther and Hagen

Wichart (*Wîchart*) one of Dietrich's men, brother of Wolfwin, Wolfprant, and Gerbart in the Dietrich epics

Wieselburg (*Misenburc*) town on the Lower Danube, now Mosonmagyaróvár (Hungary)

Witege (*Wîtege*) slayer of Nuodunc, a figure in the Dietrich epics

Wolfhart Hildebrant's nephew, in the service of Dietrich

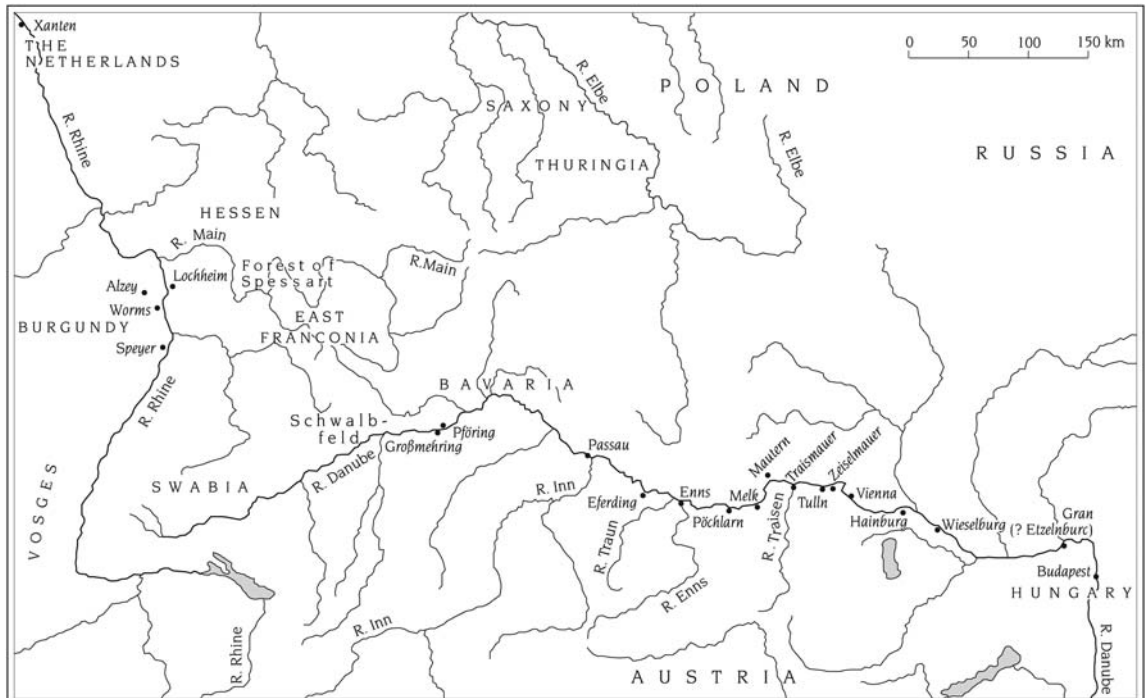
Wolfprant one of Dietrich's men. Elsewhere the brother of Wolfwin and Ritschart

Wolfwin (*Wolfwîn*) of Bern, of the Amelungs, one of Dietrich's men, brother of Ritschart and Wolfprant in the epic *Biterolf*

Worms (*Wormez*, *Wormz*) on the Rhine, capital of the Burgundian kings

Xanten (*Santen*) Sivrit's birthplace in the Netherlands, now in North Rhine–Westphalia

Zazamanc oriental source of silk, a city in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*



A map of the *Nibelungenlied*